

Greenleaves

Newsletter of the Bruce Grey Woodlands Association

AUTUMN 2019



www.bgwa.ca

President's Message

Alison Stewart



Happy Fall! It seemed to come early this year. Another glorious display of beauty in the forests through out Canada. What a great time of year to be in the woods!

I am currently on a 7-week business trip across north America and must say Canada and specifically Ontario/Quebec has some of the most beautiful forest colour especially in the fall. I can't wait to come home.

As you get out into the forest and woodlands be sure to stay safe as Hunting Season is upon us.

As you look at your woodlands this fall, consider the messiness of it all; consider the importance of that mess. Wildlife is an important part of the woodland ecology. Providing habitat and structure through dead wood on the forest floor, standing dead snags, and cavities in live trees may actually improve the woodland health.

There is a cycle of death and birth in a forest. In the autumn, annual plants die and then sprout in the spring to repeat the cycle. Biennial plants take two years to cycle through birth and death. Every living

(Continued on page 2)

NOV 02

**Tree
Marking
Workshop**

NOV 16

**Treivia:
see back
page**

FEB 01

**outdoor
Event
TBA**

FEB 29

**Annual
General
Meeting**

DETAILS WILL BE POSTED TO WEB SITE AS EVENTS APPROACH

*How about hosting a
member tour of your
woodlands?!?*

Contact

Chris VanderHout

519-665-7414

(President's Message, from page 1)

thing has a cycle that leads to change and renewal. Trees are perennial; and exist for years and even centuries.

Dead trees in woodlands provide fire wood and yet they also provide important structure, habitat, food and even aesthetic appeal. Trees are very remarkable. On the forest floor, salamanders and reptiles make some use of logs, stumps, bark, and slash piles. Freshly fallen trees, with their odd branches still reaching up, provide hunting perches for insectivorous birds. As a rule of thumb, the bigger the fallen log, the longer it lasts and more benefit it provides over the years. As these logs decay, they become increasingly better homes for wildlife as insects and fungi break them down.

Standing dead snags and cavity trees are also critical habitat components. Cavities in live or dead trees are used by various birds and mammals. While dead standing trees can be hazards, they are important to retain for wildlife. Sometimes, too, they are some of the most interesting trees in the woodlot with their bare skeletal stems and branches, interesting colors, cracks, folds, and cavities. Big dead trees have the potential to develop larger cavities and to stay in the woodlot longer. At least thirty species of birds commonly use standing snags for perches.

Our upcoming tree marking workshop will cover some of these factors.

The squirrels and chipmunks around the farm are definitely taking advantage of the large cone and nut crops this year. We have had many a stock pile in the pots, containers, rocks and even our shoes/boots left out overnight at the house.

Now onto Association business. We held our recent board meeting on Oct 23rd. Amongst regularly discussed items we focused on upcoming events and outreach activities. I am very happy at the registration for the upcoming Tree Marking workshop which now has a waiting list. We will possibly look at hosting another one next year. The events committee is hard at work preparing the late fall and winter activities. See the website and newsletter for dates.

Our AGM is now scheduled for Saturday, Feb 29, 2020. More details will come out in January for this.

If you have any suggestions about an event that would be suitable, please reach out to us. We would love your input!

Sincerely,

Alison Stewart

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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From the Forest Floor to the Garden

by Gary Kenny, BGWA Member

Fallen leaves are one of autumn's most abundant but unknown and under-appreciated crops. I harvest a goodly quantity each fall from the forest floors on our farm and after shredding them with a lawn mower, I turn them loose to work their magic.

As dedicated gardeners know, organic matter (OM) is vital to biologically healthy soil, and one of the very best sources of OM are autumn leaves. They are packed with trace minerals that trees draw from deep in the soil. When added to a perennial flower or vegetable garden, they feed earthworms and beneficial microbes. Their addition to soil lightens and improves its tilth and helps sandy soil retain moisture. Leaves are also a great source of carbon to balance the nitrogen in a compost pile from grass cuttings, kitchen waste, and other nitrogen rich green composting material. As mulch they insulate tender plants from the cold.

Shredding leaves makes them easier to work with and prevents them from packing together into layers, which can prevent penetration from water or air. It also dramatically reduces the volume of large amounts of them. Typically, I apply a layer of shredded leaves on my vegetable gardens as protective mulch each fall, and store the rest in bins for use the following spring and summer when I add them to compost.

In time and with moisture, shredded leaves become something called leaf mold which does wonders for the soil. Leaf mold consists of partially decomposed leaves that are somewhere along the continuum between shredded leaves and humus. If you wonder what it looks like, next time you're in a forest, kneel down and push away a small area of dry leaves. Underneath, you'll find a layer of leaf mold – a crumbly brown material with a pleasant, earthy aroma. Leaf mold has several positive attributes. It can hold up to 500 % of its own weight in water. Besides helping retain moisture in the soil by reducing evaporation, leaf mold also absorbs rainwater to reduce runoff, and in hot weather, helps cool roots and foliage. Most leaves are slightly acidic when they fall, with a pH below 6. As they break-down into leaf mold, however, the pH rises into more of a neutral range. Leaf mold will not correct pH problems, but will have a moderating effect.

Over time, yearly applications of leaf mold mulch, whether directly onto the soil or mixed with compost, can significantly improve the quality of your soil. The result will be better water-holding capacity, a more friable texture, and an increase in beneficial soil life. If you add shredded leaves directly to the soil, make sure you add some nitrogen-rich fertilizer (I use compost I make and mix with nitrogen-rich chicken manure) to help the leaves decompose and to ensure that soil microbes don't use all of the available nitrogen in the soil.

A caveat: Avoid walnut and butternut tree leaves both of which contain a chemical called juglone. It will stunt or kill many plants including some vegetables. Let the forest help you with any future gardening efforts.



OPINION

Trivializing the 50 Million Tree Program: The Truth

by Gerald Guenkel, BGWA Member

This past April the Ontario provincial government cancelled the 50 Million Tree Program created by a previous provincial government as a carbon sequestration program. A wonderful side effect of planting so many trees is how this also helps to clean the air and water, protect shorelines and reduce erosion in southern Ontario.

Rob Keen, CEO of Forests Ontario, said since 2008 more than 27 million trees had been planted across Ontario through the program, which saved landowners up to 90 % of the costs of large-scale tree planting.

It was a sad day when the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry announced this cut.

Once I read the following quote from the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, I couldn't quietly stand by. Justine Lewkowicz, spokesperson for Natural Resources and Forestry, said in a statement that the forestry industry, which depends on a sustainable supply of wood, is a responsible steward of the province's forests. "On average, the forestry industry plants 68 million trees per year, creating jobs for foresters, nurseries and tree planters," she wrote.

This statement is 100% true. However, it is misleading with respect to comparing it to the 50 Million Tree Program's approximate 2.7 million trees planted per year.

Point One: The forest industry is a responsible steward of the province's forests.

The industry is a responsible steward as it must adhere to the Crown Forest Sustainability Act (CFSA, 1994), the regulatory framework ensuring that Crown lands (public lands) are taken care of to the standards expected by the people of Ontario. We (the people) are the landlord making rules for our Crown lands. We should be reminded, therefore, the industry is doing a good job of adhering to our expectations, not that the industry is leading the charge in managing Crown

forests for the betterment of Ontarians. In fact, we are known for having the best sustainably managed forests in the world.

Point Two: On average, the forestry industry plants 68 million trees per year, creating jobs for foresters, nurseries and tree planters.

This statement is 100% true, however, it is misleading when compared to the 50 Million Tree Program. You need to understand two definitions before we go on; reforestation and afforestation. *Reforestation* is defined as the replacement of trees where trees have been harvested. *Afforestation* is defined as planting trees where no trees have been growing for a long time (i.e. abandoned farm fields), thereby creating new forests.

The 68 million trees planted on Crown land is a required by law under the CFSA as a reforestation function of recently harvested lands, therefore, this activity ensures the health of existing forests but does very little to add additional forests further enhancing carbon sequestration.. Since 2008 more than 27 million trees have been planted across Ontario by the 50 Million Tree Program. Since only abandoned farmlands were planted, this is 100% an afforestation effort. That's a pure carbon sequestration effort!

On the topic of employment, yes the forested Crown lands are great employers, however, one must be reminded that the areas planted under the 50 Million Tree program also creates jobs now and in the future. Everybody sees the planting jobs now, but in the future many of these forests will be available for wood resources, much like the harvesting of pine stands now that were planted 50 years ago. (How much additional land would that be in the future? To date approximately 14,000ha (34,500acres) of potential wood supply as well as all the other values our forests provide.

(Continued on page 5)

(Opinion, continued from page 4)

My summary is that the Natural Resources and Forestry Minister John Yakabuski is justifying the cancelling of the 50 Million Tree program by trivializing it compared to the Crown land reforestation efforts. The most dramatic influence of using trees to slow down climate change is right here in Southern Ontario by afforestation efforts.

Quick facts

- In 2019, the 50 Million Tree Program received funding from the Government of Canada. This support as well as support from corporate sponsors and donors ensures we're able to continue tree planting on private lands and continuing our contribution to fighting climate change.

- Trees planted since the 50 Million Tree program began now sequester more than 21,000 tonnes of carbon annually.

What can you do?

- Plant trees.
- Write to the Minister John Yakabuski at the Ministry Natural Resources and Forestry to support afforestation along with reforestation in Ontario.
- Donate to support tree planting.

Gerald Guenkel RPF.

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New Science

Compiled by Malcolm Silver, BGWA
Member & Newsletter Editor

New data on the evolution of plants and origin of species

There are over 500,000 plant species in the world today. They all evolved from a common ancestor. How this leap in biodiversity happened is still unclear. Researchers now present the results of a unique project on the evolution of plants. Using genetic data from 1,147 species the team created the most comprehensive evolutionary tree for green plants to date.

REF: www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/10/191023132249.htm

Ants inhibit at least 14 different plant diseases

New research shows that ants inhibit at least 14 different plant diseases. The small insects secrete antibiotics from glands in the body. On their legs and body, they also host

colonies of bacteria that secrete antibiotics. It is probably these substances that inhibit a number of different diseases and researchers now hope to find biological pesticides that may conquer resistant plant diseases.

REF: www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/10/191017075546.htm

Efficient synthesis of ginkgo compound could lead to new drugs, 'green' insecticides

Chemists at Scripps Research have invented an efficient method for making a synthetic version of the plant compound bilobalide, which is naturally produced by ginkgo trees to repel insect pests and is not toxic to humans. It's a significant feat because bilobalide -- and closely related compounds -- hold potential commercial value as medicines and "green" insecticides.

REF: www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/10/191017101231.htm

How wildfires trap carbon for centuries to millennia

Charcoal produced by wildfires could trap carbon for hundreds of years and help mitigate climate change, according to new research. A new study quantifies the important role that charcoal plays in helping to compensate for carbon emissions from fires. Researchers say that this charcoal could effectively 'lock away' a considerable amount of carbon for years to come.

REF: www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/08/190805134012.htm

Diverse Forests Are Better at Accumulating Carbon

A higher species richness could boost plant communities' ability to mitigate climate change, a study suggests.

REF: www.the-scientist.com/the-literature/diverse-forests-are-better-at-accumulating-carbon-65109

Bridge Building in the Woodlot

by Paul & Patty Kruis, BGWA Members

THE PROBLEM

Every woodlot owner has spent time in their bush wondering if improvements to their trails should be made, and if the effort and cost are worth it. Such was the case for us with one lower wet trail. During spring runoff, or after a decent rain, the trail was too wet to drive on and with climate change causing heavier rainfalls, something had to be done to ensure we have year-round access to the west half of our bush. We made the decision to make another trail on higher ground, to avoid low areas. The top of a ridge to the north was the right spot for a dry trail with one exception, a small ravine divided it in two. We pondered for a few years about this obstacle, looked at options and decided how to proceed.

A BRIDGE - THE RIGHT WAY TO GO?

Since we did not want to disturb the ground at the bottom of the ravine, a bridge seemed a better option than a culvert. Now, if one is contemplating a bridge, there are a few things to think about. You're not just building a deck for the kids to play on. Safety is a big concern. We'd be driving tractors on the bridge, and hauling logs too. Cost is another factor that for us was important, but since we were in no hurry, we took our time finding used or recycled materials where possible.

DETAILS

The bridge needed to span a small ravine that varied from 5 ft deep to about 20 ft deep, and from 15 to 40 ft across. We chose a section where there was a natural narrowing and where it was relatively shallow. With foundational support on each end, the bridge length came to 24 ft with a clear span of about 20 ft. The deck width was 10' 3" with an inside spacing between the curbs of 9' 3"; plenty of width for my tractor and wagon. We also included a mini-deck off to one side as a viewing platform of the ravine below.

Safety is critical so we ensured the design met the anticipated loads (a little engineering help was appreciated). It was also important that our installation crew was aware of safety concerns when handling heavy bridge sections.

Equipment and machinery required was our loader tractor, a borrowed backhoe, and a portable sawmill to cut beech into decking lumber. We also used a dump trailer to haul the rocks and a wagon to move the pre-fabricated bridge pieces to the site.

We had lots of rock lines for the stone foundation and plenty of beech trees that were showing signs of beech bark disease. This we cut into 3" deck boards. We sourced scrap steel I-beams pieces, 8x8 PT sleepers, PT lumber, hardware and wood preservative. Plus, we had a pile of used 2x6's to dig into to make the viewing platform. Using recycled hardware, I-beam cut-offs, and borrowing equipment kept cost to a minimum. Since it would take 2 years for the lumber to dry, we had plenty of time to source other components and get the I-beams welded up and in place.

CONSTRUCTION STARTED IN 2016

The trail on both sides of the ravine was cleared and foundation rock and stone were placed to ensure proper bridge support while leaving the area below the span in its original condition.



I-beam sections were welded to the correct length and cross members welded in place. Holes for attaching the decking were then pre-drilled. When the I-beam assembly was complete it was tested for weight capacity to ensure there would be no issues. It was then hauled to site and placed on 8x8 sleepers. 6x6's were stacked at each end to make a wall to keep the backfilled rock and gravel in place.

(Continued on page 7)

(Bridge Building, from page 6)



BUILDING THE DECK

The beech was logged in 2017 and cut into 3" planks, with widths varying from 8" to 14". After drying 2 years, the lumber was ready for the deck build. Now is beech the best lumber for a bridge? Probably not, but the price was right, and since the natural twisting, typical of beech, wasn't a big issue for our bridge planks, we thought we may as well try. Two coats of wood preservative should help it survive longer. The deck was pre-assembled in the shop, then separated into three sections for the trip to the bush on the wagon. The deck planks bolt to a 6" wide curb along each edge which would help keep the planks straight and in place.

INSTALLING THE DECK

With the deck hauled to the trailhead, installation began. Before laying the deck, the I-beams were shimmed to ensure they made firm contact with the underlying sleepers. The first deck section installed was the eastern end, which allowed the loader tractor to drive partly on the bridge when placing the western end.



When the main deck was done, the railing was installed on the mini-deck. This will be a great spot to stop when snowshoeing or hiking. We'll probably add a bench in the future. Moving these large and heavy deck sections along the trail was challenging, but by going and manoeuvring slowly between the trees it was just fine.



Final grading completed the bridge in early Oct, 2019.



Now, was this the best way to make a bridge for a bush trail? Do you have any ideas for how it could have been done better? Why not share your thoughts in the next issue of *Greenleaves* so we can all get a better understanding of Bridge Building in the Woodlot.

My Favourite Tree

by Gary Kenny, BGWA Member

I call it the GANDALF TREE. *Gandalf* because this old, gnarled, shaggy-barked, and in places moss-covered tree reminds me of the Ents, the talking trees in the 2001-2003 trilogy, *Lord of the Rings* which is based on the books of J.R.R. Tolkien. Gandalf of course was the benevolent wizard in the series. It's a Hop-hornbeam tree, *Ostrya virginiana*, commonly known as Ironwood. Given its dense, hard wood, apparently the densest wood among native trees in Ontario – *ironwood* seems a most fitting name.

Hop-hornbeam is the only species of the genus *Ostrya* native to Canada. The *hop* in the name refers to the similarity of the tree's fruit clusters to hops, an ingredient in beer-making; *horn* refers to the hardness of the wood; and *beam* comes from an archaic English word for tree. It is slow-growing and fairly long-lived, reaching some 150 years. Some of the trees are reported to have lived much longer. I don't know how old our Gandalf tree is, but an Ironwood tree of similar girth – about 84 inches – was said to be 250 years old! Considered an understory tree, Hop-hornbeams generally grow straight and narrow in diameter to about 40 feet. The Gandalf tree is rather unusual. It's about 50 feet tall and its limbs begin to spread out just eight feet from the ground, suggesting that it began its life in a clearing where it didn't have to compete for sunlight. Just the limbs themselves have the circumference of many of the Hop-hornbeam trees we find in Grey and Bruce County hardwood forests.

The genus name, *Ostrya*, may come from the Greek work *ostrua*, which means a tree with very hard wood, or *ostruos*, meaning scale, in reference to the scaly catkins. The species name, *virginiana*, means from Virginia. Use of the common name ironwood has sometimes caused confusion. Dozens of tree species worldwide have been dubbed ironwood trees. Included in the list is *Carpinus caroliniana*, also referred to as American hornbeam (and which is commonly called blue-beech, although it is not a beech but has a smooth beech-like bark that is blue-gray in colour). It's also called muscle-wood because of its muscle-like ripples. *Carpinus caroliniana* also occurs in Ontario hardwood forests. Both



Ostrya virginiana and *Carpinus caroliniana* grow in the forest on our farm, in some places close together.

Hop-hornbeam is considered too small of a tree and its wood too hard for most commercial uses. However, it has been used for tool handles, canes, and runners on sleighs. When we moved to our farm 13 years ago, we found an old 12-foot-long wagon tongue that was made of *Ostrya virginiana*. Given its density and because it burns very hot, the wood of the Hop-hornbeam makes a coveted fuel for wood stoves. The seeds, buds and catkins of the species are a food source for songbirds, squirrels, pheasants, and grouse. The bark and inner wood were apparently used by Indigenous peoples to treat toothache, sore muscles, coughs, and other ailments.

Gary Kenny is steward of River Croft Farm located near Neustadt and a BGWA member.

Building a Soul Trail

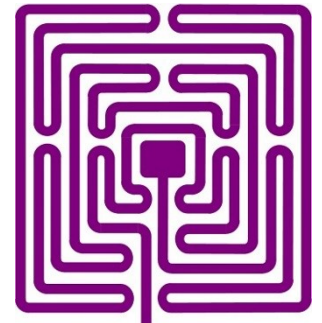
by Neil Baldwin, BGWA Member

Now a year in, people occasionally ask me, “so, how’s retired life?” After joking that I prefer to call it *repurposement* than *retirement*, I usually respond along the lines that there’s *still* not enough time but that most of what I do put my time and energy into are things I enjoy and/or value. Some of them are more practical while others are more esoteric; some are more for myself while others more for my community.

A project which is an all-of-the-above combination has been the design and construction of a meditative walking labyrinth through the forest. With history dating back 4000 years and found in some form in most religions and spiritual traditions, a labyrinth (as distinct from a maze) is *unicursal*, having only one path. There are no dead ends, no alternates, no trickery; one follows a single meandering route to centre, then the same way back out. Walking a labyrinth requires no problem-solving or decision-making. The rational brain is relieved of responsibility, leaving the intuitive self freed up, and the senses opened up to more fully experience the present moment.

Labyrinth walking is a great way to cultivate mindfulness. And, for those who have not had success with sit-on-the-cushion meditation (I’m one of them!), a more engaging and active way to promote mental clarity and personal peace.

A project I had thought about doing for several years but never had the time for, now in *repurposement* there was no reason or excuse not to make it happen. The Forest Labyrinth was built in several stages. In late autumn, countless lower branches were trimmed in a ¼ acre section of White Pine plantation... a great chest workout with pruning saw and loppers! In winter, path variations were tried out with each new snowfall, like a real-life Etch-a-Sketch. Flags were placed in the final pattern prior to thaw to mark each turn. Then over spring and summer the big work took place: finding, moving, and laying stones – over 2000 of them by the time all was said and done – to mark the path border.



**FOREST LABYRINTH
SCHEMATIC PATTERN**

Rather than working along the progression of the path, I had to build it from the centre out in all directions in order not to get hemmed in by the stones I was transporting on a much-abused Gorilla Cart. Along the way, I made minor variations in path and path width to work the pattern with existing tree placement since it seems they were not planted on a “perfect” grid.

A labyrinth is a unique tool created to be shared. In late August a wide range of friends and acquaintances from the community joined in a group walk to bring it to life. It is now registered on the Ontario Labyrinth Community Network and Worldwide Labyrinth Locator web sites, and I have created a web page with details, pictures, and a visit request form. BGWA members, in particular, are most welcome. To learn more, point your web browser to:



forestlabyrinth.ca

Request for Feedback Regarding New Management Plan for Inglis Falls Conservation Area

by Kevin Predon, BGWA Board Member

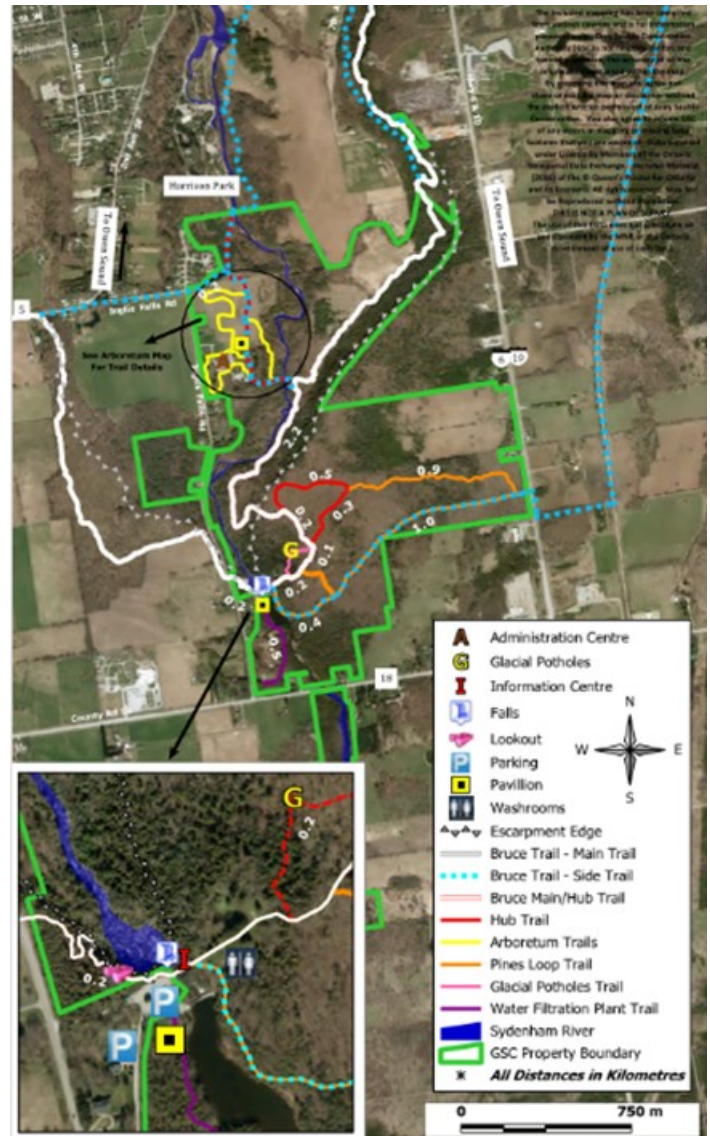
The Grey Sauble Conservation Authority is currently developing a management plan for the Inglis Falls Conservation Area.

As a valued partner organization to the GSCA, all members of the Bruce Grey Woodlands Association have been invited by Tim Lanthier, the Lands and Habitats Coordinator, to share any thoughts, comments, or questions about the property with him. (See letter next page.)

Tim has stated that our members' feedback is welcome in any format, whether it be written comments through mail or email, by phone, or even to arrange an in-person meeting at the GSCA office in Owen Sound.

Tim phone number is (519) 376-3076 x234 and his email address is t.lanthier@greysauble.on.ca

Right: locator map for Inglis Falls Conservation Area (image courtesy of GSCA)



HELP NEEDED!

We are looking for BGWA member(s) to help with our web site. Experience with Wordpress is helpful but if you have even just moderate computer literacy and have used Word to compose documents with text and graphics you can do it!

learn something new

Many Hands Make Light Work.

Contact: info@bgwa.ca

This newsletter was made possible in large part by the BGWA members who generously gave their time and effort to write the content you are enjoying. Would you please consider contributing to a future issue to keep the newsletters full and interesting? And as a thank you, all contributors are entered into a prize draw at next year's AGM for each piece contributed.

To learn more: newsletter@bgwa.ca



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July 3, 2019

Inglis Falls Conservation Area Management Planning Process

Dear Partner:

The Grey Sauble Conservation Authority is in the early stages of development a management plan for the Inglis Falls Conservation Area. The intent of this plan is to assess what the current state of the conservation area is; to identify the strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities for the property; and to develop a plan that will guide the management and development of this property into the future.

As an integral member of the Inglis Falls area community, your input and feedback is very important to us as we begin this process. As such, I would like to invite you to provide or discuss any thoughts, comments, or questions that you have related to the property, its use, its future, and its management.

Although we will be seeking public comments again further along in the process, it is important to us that our neighbours, stakeholders, and partners have an opportunity to provide input at the very start of the project.

Please provide your feedback in the format that works best for you, whether that is written comments through mail or email, or by phone. If you would like to meet to discuss, we can meet in the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority office, on another part of the Inglis Falls property, or I can come to you.

We would greatly appreciate any feedback that you have to offer.

Regards,

Tim Lanthier
Lands and Habitats Coordinator
519-376-3076 x234
tlanthier@greysauble.on.ca

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Susan McGowan
Alison Stewart*
Ron Stewart

* committee chair

TREEVIA 3

BGWA's popular tree-themed trivia gathering returns for its third year! This year, hosted by special guest Trivia sensation Ross Docherty.

Join BGWA members, woodland enthusiasts, and tree geeks on **SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16TH** at Outlaw Brewery Pub in Southampton at **2PM**. (Corner of High St and Albert St/Hwy 21)

No event charge, no advance registration required. Outlaw brewpub beer & food menu available throughout event.

Venue info: outlawbrewco.com

Prizes for winning team!

New this year! Ross will be using the SpeedQuiz app for your tablet or smartphone. Don't have a device? Don't worry, we'll playing be in small teams.

App info: speedquizzing.com

C'mon out for a fun and relaxed social event. A great easygoing way to meet other BGWA members!

