



The Rambler!

A Newsletter of the Bert Miller Nature Club
Spring 2013

Coming Up

BMNC

All indoor programs held at Stevensville Conservation Area Clubhouse, W. Main St. & Ott Rd.

Bringing Back the Dinosaurs – Alive!

Brian Pihack takes a look at cutting edge paleontology.
Mon., Mar. 18, 7:00 pm

BOS April Bird Count

Bring binoculars, guides & scopes.

Sun., April 14

Call or email for time & location.

Contact: Marcie Jacklin,
905-871-2577

mjacklin@brocku.ca

Fort Erie's Watershed

NPC representatives give an update on the Watershed Plan for Fort Erie and its implications.
Mon., Apr. 15, 7:00 pm

2013 Bert Miller Award

At the annual general meeting, Dave Mitchell was presented with the Bert Miller Award in recognition of his efforts to preserve and protect our natural environment.



Photo courtesy of Ron Goodridge

Over the years, Dave has supported about 20 different organizations through memberships or donations. One example is the contribution of a couple of tons of corn to the Trumpeter Swan project in Hamilton. He is a member of The Bert Miller Nature Club and served as a director for a number of years. He and his wife, Sandy, have also supported our club with donations and discounts offered through their business. He has been on the Environmental Advisory Committee for the Niagara Region for over 20 years. Dave's interests are varied, as shown by his involvement with Bat Conservation International, The Ontario Eastern Bluebird Society, and the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society.

He is not afraid to express his opinion in support of environmental principals. His actions helped save some of Fort Erie's wetlands from becoming a golf course. Much personal money, time, and committee work went into preserving this property.

One can't talk about Dave without mentioning Sandy, as they work as a team. Their property is like a wildlife sanctuary with trails, a wetland area, and tree plantings throughout. There are about 100 bluebird boxes and an interesting bird feeding setup which protects

Hiking Marcy's Woods

Enjoy the wonderful woodland flora & fauna in this beautiful private preserve. Meet at the end of Holloway Bay Rd.

Sun., Apr. 28, 10:00 am
Contact: Rick Stockton,
905-894-1994 or Lynda
Goodridge, 905-871-
5856

**BOS May Migratory
Bird Count**

Bring binoculars, guides
& scopes.

Sun., May 19

Call or email for time &
location.

Contact: Marcie Jacklin,
905-871-2577

mjacklin@brocku.ca

Fowler's Toad Update

Anne Yagi gives us an
overview of the latest
research on this
amphibian.

THURS., May 23, 7 pm

**Members' Night &
Potluck Supper**

Bring your own place
setting & favourite dish.
Share your photos,
digital images, nature
displays etc. Let Dawn
Pierrynowski know in
advance what you would
like to show. 905-384-
2476

Mon., June 17, **6:00 pm**

the birds from window collisions and predators. They have had flying squirrels, Great Crested Flycatchers, and up to 55 pairs of Purple Martins nesting on site. The latest project is a milkweed planting, involving over \$1000 in seed and much land preparation.

What Dave calls his "farm" has been organic for over 40 years. An interest in greenhouse horticulture and natural foods led to a search for natural biological products. This product search resulted in the establishment of their business, Natural Insect Control (NIC), now in its 24th year of operation. NIC supplies a variety of businesses and organizations, including Bird Kingdom, the Butterfly Conservatory, and the City of Toronto.

Dave is definitely deserving of this honour.

Paul Philp

Reflections From Paul

It has been a pleasure to be president of a club with such a fine executive and membership. All of us in some way have helped keep the club and its environmental initiatives on course.

For me personally, what really stands out is the many outreach opportunities that have helped raise the environmental awareness of those around us. These initiatives have been gaining momentum and show promise of continued growth. Educational programming at the library, local schools, seniors homes, and Ridgefest, the Lake Erie Coast Project, and the plans to initiate a butterfly festival all have positive community effects. We are truly meeting one of the founding objectives of "Our Club."

Putting the crystal ball into use, I am looking forward to Dawn Pierrynowski returning as president, Lynda Goodridge becoming vice-president, Victoria Busche as a new director, and the rest of us still so interested in what is happening that we are all remaining as directors on the board. I predict many more successes on the horizon.

As a parting thought, any member is welcome at executive meetings and I am glad to have seen that happen a bit in the last year. But watch out - you might get hooked.

Butterfly/Dragonfly Count

Bring a lunch, field guides, nets, & bins.
Meet in parking lot,
Stevensville
Conservation Area.
Sun., June 23, 9:00 am
Contact: Paul Philp,
905-894-2723

Ridgeway Summer Festival

Our annual display at
this popular event.
Volunteers needed.
Sat./Sun. July 6 & 7
Contact: Lynda
Goodridge, 905-871-
5856

NFNC

Monthly indoor
programs held at
Niagara Falls Public
Library, Victoria Av., 3rd
Wed., 7:30 p.m.
Speakers on a variety of
topics. Complete
schedule online:
**niagaranatureclub.
tripod.com**

Beamer Point Hawk Watch

Look for migrating
hawks, falcons & eagles.
Family Friendly.
Good Friday, Mar. 29,
All day. Contact: Don
Mills, 905-892-3973

Winter Tree Identification



Photo courtesy of Carol Horvat

About 20 of us gathered, on what turned out to be a very nice day in late January, to practice our skills at winter tree identification. This outing was held at the Stevensville Conservation Area and consisted of 3 parts. For the first part, we took a leisurely hike, stopping every time we found (or thought we'd found) a different kind of tree. We shared clues, sometimes didn't come to a consensus, and moved on in search of more species. A few twigs were clipped for further investigation back at the clubhouse.

For the second part, we returned to the clubhouse for a washroom, nourishment, and social break. Dawn wasn't able to do the hike, so, instead, she made a delicious soup which we shared at lunch.

The third part of the day involved some detective work. With no leaves or bark as clues, we tried to identify the small twigs and figure out to which tree they really belonged. There were clue sheets available, but identification of some twigs still proved to be a challenge.

What is important is not whether we can identify every tree we see, but, as John Potter taught me, always try to look at all parts of trees, buds included. Thanks, John, for some of your simple tips that one won't find in tree books: e.g. "Where branches fall off of a red maple, look for a face of an older person."

By the way, the Stevensville Conservation Area does have a good variety of tree species.

Paul Philp

Cootes Paradise

Enjoy a walk near the Nature Centre to the marsh boardwalk. Meet at Tim Horton's, Prudhomme's Landing. Bring a lunch. Sun., May 26, 9:00 am
Contact: Joyce Sankey, 905-329-9672

Queenston Heights Pot Luck Supper & Walk

Bring a favourite dish to share and a place setting. Meet at the picnic area. Wed., June 19, 6:00 pm.
Contact: Giselle Mills, 905-892-3973

PFN

Monthly indoor programs held 4th Monday, 7:30 p.m., at Mountainview United Church, 150 Glendale Ave., St. Catharines. For details on speakers and outings, visit www.peninsulafielddnats.com

Geology & Early Wildflowers @ Louth Conservation Area

Sun., Apr. 14, 1:00 pm
Contact: Brian Calvert, 905-892-6267

Niagara Glen with Norfolk Field Naturalists

Sat., Apr. 27, 10:30 am
Contact: Brian Calvert, 905-892-6267

A Heart-felt Thank You

Outgoing President Paul Philp received a certificate of appreciation at the AGM for a job well done over the past two years. As President, Paul provided an excellent leadership model, always choosing the high road when difficult issues arose. His calm, yet thorough, approach helped us to focus on the various options and their outcomes.



Photo courtesy of Ron Goodridge

During his term, he made a concerted effort to engage youth in nature through outreach programs and events such as the regional Envirothon.

Paul has a strong commitment to our club's objectives, and we are happy that he will remain on the board to share his enthusiasm and experience.

Lynda Goodridge

The Crescent Beach Project

On a cold, wet spring morning in April 2012 a small group of dedicated volunteers met at Crescent Beach and planted American Beach Grass (*Ammophila breviligulata*). This project had been initiated the previous year when a group of people in the Crescent Park area approached the Town of Fort Erie with their ideas for shoreline improvement. They asked the Town to clean up the beach park and, specifically, to remove a large clump of weeds that had taken over on the west side. The Town obliged and removed the weeds, which had been identified as Mugwort, an aggressive and invasive alien species in Ontario.

The next step was to plant the Beach Grass with a two-fold purpose: to replace and help keep out the unwanted weeds and to replenish sand on the beach. American Beach Grass attracts sand to form around its shoots, then grows up through the sand to form a continuously growing dune. This process is needed to replenish

**Wildflowers &
Geology @ Woodend
Conservation Area**

Sun. May 5, 1:00 pm
Contact: Brian Calvert,
905-892-6267

**Malcolmson Eco-Park
Birding with Barb**

Tues., May 14, 8:30 am
Contact: Barbara West,
905-935-5339

**Birding Short Hills
Provincial Park**

Meet at Wiley Rd
Entrance.
Sat. May 18, 8:30 am
Contact: Barbara West,
905-935-5339

**Welcome to our new
members:**

**Don & Gisele Mills
Carol Horvat
Kristen Osborne
Lorraine Brown-Joyce
Ken Joyce
Eliza Lochhead**

sand that has been eroded and washed away over the years at beaches such as Crescent Beach.



Photo courtesy of June Chipp

Members of the Crescent Beach Improvement Association (CRESBIA) and the Bert Miller Nature Club planted a good quantity of the grass on the flat beach in front of the west seawall and on the slope. The plants had been graciously donated by a resident of Waverly Beach. This was important because it is always best to use plants that come from the same area. Help and guidance in the project were kindly provided by Albert Garofalo.

Our little green shoots took hold and continued to grow through one of the hottest and driest summers on record. Although an act of vandalism destroyed the plants on the slope, most of those on the beach hung on tenaciously. We could already see a small sand dune starting to form in this area.

In September, volunteers from CRESBIA and The Bert Miller Nature Club got together for a weeding party. Then, in November, they obtained more grass and topped up the planting area.

One of the unexpected side benefits of the project was the emergence of other green leafy plants and wildflowers following the removal of the Mugwort. With Albert's help, we identified various native species as well as non-native, but welcome plants, including: Evening Primrose (*Oenothera biennis*), Soapwort or Bouncing Bet (*Saponaria officinalis*), Trailing Wild Bean (*Strophostyles helvula*), Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*), Seaside Spurge (*Euphorbia polygonifolia*), Russian Thistle (*Salsola kalii*), and Bunchgrass (*Eragrostis pectinatus*).

**Bert Miller
Nature Club
2013
Board of Directors**

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Lynda Goodridge

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Newsletter Editor:
Lynda Goodridge
With the help of
Peter BonEnfant

Published twice a year

Submissions are always
welcome and can be
forwarded by email to
lynda.goodridge@
distributel.net

**Visit the BMNC
website at**

www.bertmillernatureclub.org

We look forward to seeing our Beach Grass and other plants come alive in the spring and, hopefully, a sand dune forming and spreading.

June Chipp

**Nature in Niagara 2013
“Who Cares About Wetlands”**

Wetlands are frequently misunderstood and their contributions to human life undervalued. As part of this year’s Nature in Niagara series, The Bert Miller Nature Club is hosting an information presentation on these important habitats at the Fort Erie Public Library’s Centennial Branch on Wednesday, April 24th, at 7:00 pm.



Photo courtesy of Ron Goodridge

Members of the public are invited to come and learn about the animal and plant life that can be found in these fascinating ecosystems. They will also discover how wetlands service human needs. In the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy, experts pointed to the loss of wetlands as an important factor contributing to the extent of damage and flooding that occurred.

Wetlands act as environmental kidneys by cleansing the surface water and controlling water flow. When water levels are high, they soak up the excess, releasing it when levels drop. The vegetation found in this habitat serves as a buffer, minimizing erosion caused by storm surges. In addition, they provide nursery areas for fish and breeding grounds for wildlife.

As a follow-up to the presentation, a family-friendly field outing will be scheduled to give participants a first-hand look at a wetland ecosystem. Details on date, time and location will be announced on April 24th.

Lynda Goodridge



Saturday, June 1, 2013

Looking to get rid of clutter? Clean out your cupboards and check the garage for any items in reasonable condition that you are no longer using. Donate them to the BMNC Garage Sale and we will take them off your hands and make a bit of money for the club. We will also be looking for home baked goods and native plants to add to the sale.

Many thanks to Patty Moss for organizing this fund-raising event and offering her garage for the venue. She will need some volunteers. Anyone able to donate a couple of hours to help with set-up or the actual sale can contact her at 905-834-1812. Patty is also willing to pick up any large items that are difficult to bring to meetings.

Butterfly Festival
Saturday, September 21, 2013
Rain date: Sept. 22, 2013
Stevensville Conservation Area



Photo courtesy of Ron Goodridge

Details are being worked out for this family friendly event that will offer something for both kids and adults. A hot dog BBQ, butterfly hikes, displays, crafts, and Monarch Butterfly tagging are some of the activities that are

planned. The Festival will give us a chance to raise funds for outreach programs through food sales and butterfly tagging opportunities for the public. More information will be announced when plans are finalized.

Tale of a Hairy Woodpecker



Photo courtesy of Denise Ball

On Tuesday, February 26th, Denise Ball rescued this female Hairy Woodpecker when it collided with her front window, splitting its lower bill.

After a call to her local veterinarian, Denise was referred to Dr. Ker, a licensed wildlife vet in Thorold. Using a special glue and some tape, Dr. Ker was able to repair the bill so that the bird could eat. The little lady had a healthy appetite and feasted on meal worms for a few days to regain her strength.

Denise picked up the bird on Friday evening and released it in her backyard with the assistance of Janet Kellam. The bird immediately flew to the suet feeder and has been a regular visitor just about every day.

Nice work, Denise! Your prompt actions ensured a happy ending to this story.

Lynda Goodridge