

The Quinte Naturalist

The Quinte Field Naturalists Association is affiliated with Ontario Nature, a non-profit organization sponsoring nature education, conservation and research.

A Summary of some of the events and sightings during the past summer.



It may seem odd to receive a newsletter labelled Summer in October but seasons are a human concept and we can't even agree when seasons begin or end or how many there are. Some indigenous cultures count five seasons. In science we measure astronomical seasons and meteorological seasons precisely using different criteria and arriving at different dates. In Ontario you could argue that summer ends on Labour Day when the school summer holiday finishes. In nature there's no such confusion. Each species uses certain environmental cues to determine what it should be doing. Shorebirds like this greater yellowlegs have finished nesting in northern Ontario. By late July hormonal changes triggered by the shortening daylight hours tell them summer is over and it's time to head for their winter homes. This individual had reached the Moira River behind Signal Brewery by August 13. (Photo by John Blaney)

Club Meetings

MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

May 5. Our speaker was Karrin Broadhurst. She outlined her career living and working in Sudbury and Sarnia for companies and agencies such as Domtar, the federal Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and the Great Lakes Pollution Prevention Centre. Air pollution in these cities affected her health. Now that she has retired to Belleville she works to create sustainable urban landscapes as a member of Belleville's Green Task Force.



As would be expected in May members reported sightings of many of our local breeding birds such as yellow warbler, brown thrasher, scarlet tanager and rose-breasted grosbeak. (Photo by Tom Wheatley} Especially welcome were reports of nesting piping plovers at Presqu'île. (Photo by Andrea Kingsley} This endangered species is so rare that reports of 85 nesting pairs in the Great Lakes area was celebrated as a major victory for conservation.



May 14. Our last gathering of the season was the annual dinner at Emmanuel United Church in Foxboro. After finishing our dinner of either Vegan Lentil Un-Meatballs or Chicken with Mushroom Sauce we enjoyed a light-hearted talk from Steve Burrows, author of the birder murder series of novels. The talk included Steve's brief explanations of the varying reviews of his books from sometimes less than approving critics including his wife and also an unsuccessful attempt to one-up Margaret Atwood. Thanks to Cheryl Mound and her crew at Emmanuel Church and to Steve Burrows for a delicious dinner and amusing evening.

Executive Meetings

Your executive held two Zoom meetings over the summer, June 2 and Sept. 8. The purpose of these meetings is to manage the club's finances, discuss the progress of QFN's projects, and plan for the future. The board needs advice from members.

As our corresponding secretary Elizabeth Churcher puts in many hours and late nights, even in summer. She summarized her work for the board and members:

Responded to Environmental Registries, Surveys and questions issued by nature organizations such as Environmental Defence, Ontario Nature, Wildlife Preservation, Nature Conservancy, on the following topics: plastics, Highway 413, Bill 5, Bill C5, Wasaga Beach.

With Dan's guidance we have established a healthy financial footing. Maintaining our financial records is more complicated than it used to be because a significant portion of recorded income is actually grant money earmarked for expenses related to the work of the Tree Committee.



Photo via Think Turtle Conservation Initiative

ON SEPTEMBER 15 THINK TURTLE VOLUNTEERS RELEASED RECENT HATCHLINGS IN BELLEVILLE WITHIN 1 KILOMETRE OF WHERE THE MOTHER HAD NESTED.

Our annual budget set aside \$4000 for projects beyond the work of the Tree Committee. To date we have authorized \$1300 to support other organizations. A few years ago Denise Wilkins had to leave the board although she continues to work on projects such as the maintenance of a wildflower garden at the Tweed post office. In recognition of Denise's work for QFN and for nature we have donated \$300 to Sandy Pines Wildlife Centre <https://sandypineswildlife.org/>.

We have also approved \$500 to help send a student to the Ontario Nature Youth Summit <https://ontarionature.org/events/youth-summit/> and \$500 to Think Turtle Conservation Initiative based in North Hastings <https://thinkturtle.ca/>.

We still have \$2700 to donate to other worthy nature organizations or projects. Do you have suggestions? Please contact a board member

Advocacy

At our executive meetings our corresponding secretary, Elizabeth Churcher, always gives an account of her work advocating for QFN and nature. Here is her report from our meeting on Sept.8.

1) Wrote a letter of Support for Ontario Nature application for a grant that would provide funds for an ON Youth Council member to organize and implement a workshop and birding outing to teach young people about birds wintering in the Quinte area.

2) Wrote a letter of Support for SSJI application for a grant that would provide funds to organize art workshops led by an artist in residence, for elementary and Secondary students, to be implemented at the location of Hudgin House.

3) Signed an ON Network letter to the Federal Department of Finance requesting that the Government of Canada increase investments in protecting and restoring nature.

4)Radio Interview. Participated in a CJBQ interview, informing the community about the opportunities provided by QFN Advocacy Strategies.

5)Responded to Environmental Registries, Surveys and questions issued by nature organizations such as Environmental Defence, Ontario Nature, Wildlife Preservation, Nature Conservancy, on the following topics: plastics, Highway 413, Bill 5, Bill C5, Wasaga Beach.



Bill 5 mentioned above is no longer a bill. It is now the law. Ontario Nature summarizes the major problems with the law on its website.

Bill 5 is a sweeping piece of legislation that amends several pieces of legislation and creates new laws. Most significantly it eliminates the Endangered Species Act and replaces it with a much weaker and performative Species Conservation Act. It also creates the Special Economic Zones Act, which allows Cabinet to exempt projects from all provincial laws, regulations and municipal bylaws with no guardrails or criteria.

Outings

June 19 – Stoco Fen



JOHN LOWRY (CENTRE) EXPLAINS THE SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE STOCO FEN TO THE GROUP. PHOTO BY HERMAN LOPEZ

Eighteen members of the Quinte Field Naturalists were on the hunt for beautiful orchids on Thursday, June 19th along a road that runs through Stoco Fen Provincial Park, east of Tweed. There is no actual public access to the park property proper but the roadway allows one to view examples of the park's spectacular flora from the road.



THE SHOWY LADY'S SLIPPER ATTRACTS POLLINATORS BY COLOUR RATHER THAN ODOUR. THE ROLLED IN EDGES OF THE FLOWER AND LINES INSIDE THE POUCH GUIDE POLLINATORS. BEES BECOME TRAPPED AND CAN EXIT ONLY THROUGH A SMALL PASSAGE WHERE THEY BRUSH AGAINST THE PLANT'S REPRODUCTIVE PARTS DEPOSITING OR COLLECTING POLLEN. THE RESULT CAN BE 50,000 SEEDS PER FLOWER. VERY FEW OF THOSE SEEDS WILL GERMINATE AND THOSE THAT DO WILL NOT FLOWER FOR ABOUT EIGHT YEARS. PROBABLY MOST REPRODUCTION IS DONE VEGETATIVELY THROUGH RIZOMES. SEED PRODUCTION IS STILL IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT CREATES BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY. ALSO THE TINY LIGHT SEEDS CAN BE CARRIED GREAT DISTANCES TO ESTABLISH NEW COLONIES. PHOTO BY JOHN LOWRY.

During this time period (late May – late June) a number of specialized plants can be seen in this area that are characteristic of fens. The members were treated to a beautiful array of Showy Lady's-slippers (*Cypripedium reginae*) as well as Northern Pitcher Plant (*Sarracenia purpurea*), Marsh Valerian (*Valeriana dioica*), Balsam Ragwort (*Packera paupercula*), Bog-rosemary (*Andromeda polifolia*) and even some Small Bog Cranberry (*Vaccinium microcarpum*). Also seen were several Yellow Lady's-slippers (*Cypripedium parviflorum*) which tend to appear earlier in the season.

Following the two hour walk, a number of the participants ventured into Tweed to sample the fare at the Cube Coffee Bar located on Victoria Street North.

July 11 - Goodrich-Loomis Conservation Area



On Thursday July 11th, seven members of the Quinte Field Naturalists ventured into the scenic Goodrich-Loomis Conservation Area property, located northwest of Brighton. The property, owned by the Lower Trent Conservation Authority, is 441 acres (179 ha) in size and features an esker, remnant prairie habitat, oak savannah, provincially significant wetlands (PSW) and mature mixed forest. The



conservation area was created in 1975 with the purchase of the properties of Frank Goodrich and Ray and Allen Loomis.

The outing was timed to coincide with the appearance of Butterfly Milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) and Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) and the milkweed did not disappoint, being visible in abundance throughout the meadows.

Also cutting across the property is the significant Cold Creek, a cold water stream that is renowned for its trout population. The creek has its headwaters in Alnwick-Haldimand Township to the west (north of Grafton) and runs west to east 33 km (20 miles) before emptying into the Trent River in the village of Frankford.

September 5, Nellie Lunn Trail

By John Lowry



We are very fortunate in the Quinte Region to have a lot of interesting natural areas relatively close by to explore. Today it was off to the municipally-owned Nellie Lunn Park just south of Coe Hill with the Quinte Field Naturalists to explore the beautiful trail there. The trail has recently benefited from upgrades including two new boardwalks thanks to the efforts of Wollaston Township Deputy Mayor Sheila

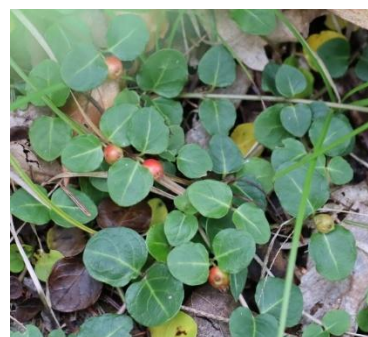
Currie and others who have worked hard to improve the park. After the walk it was off for a very tasty lunch at the Monarch Cafe in Coe Hill. The first picture was taken by my partner Lori along the shore of Urbach Lake one spectacular aspect of the trail.



John and Lori have visited the trail a few times, taking pictures to post in iNaturalist.



Bunchberry (left. Photo by Lori) and partridgeberry (right. Photo by John) are low-growing forest plants with fairly recognizable leaves. They both have bright red berries in late summer which provide food for birds and small mammals.



More QFN Projects

Recycling for the Nature Conservancy of Canada

A note from John Lowry

NO LONGER COLLECTING POP CANS



Due to a change in circumstances, we will **no longer be collecting** aluminum **POP cans** in our alcohol container collection drive.

Quinte Waste Solutions no longer has the contract for local recycling services and the new company has different rules regarding accepting quantities of pop cans. Further, the imposition of American tariffs on aluminum has complicated the recycling of cans.

Therefore, we will no longer be collecting the POP cans and ask that you simply put any pop can in your blue box for recycling. Thank you in advance for your consideration in this matter.

Editorial Note: John is still collecting alcohol cans and bottles but there will be less money to contribute to NCC. You can help make up the deficit by contributing directly to NCC for a tax receipt. QFN cannot give tax receipts.

Frink Centre Feeders

For the past few years Ted Pordham and Marie Clarke have maintained the bird feeders at the Frink Centre on behalf of QFN. Earlier this year Ted noted that the winter storms had caused some damage to feeders that were already somewhat dilapidated. The facility did not reflect well on Quinte Field Naturalists. It is time for a change. At our next meeting we will be explaining a new plan to reinvigorate the feeders.

Thank you to Ted and Marie for keeping the feeders filled and agreeing to continue with the job for another year.



THE NEWLY COMPLETED HI-LO BRIDGE IS A BEAUTIFUL STRUCTURE WHICH SHOULD LAST A LONG TIME. QUINTE CONSERVATION DID A GREAT JOB IN BOTH THE FUNDRAISING AND THE CONSTRUCTION. PHOTO AND CAPTION BY TED PORDHAM.

Tweed Post Office

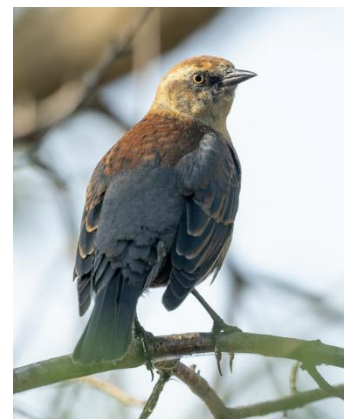
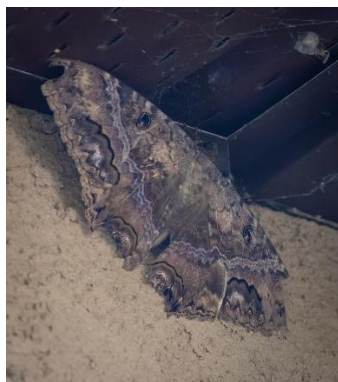
Pictures and text by John Lowry

Beautifully on display at the Tweed Post Office is a nice selection of native plants. The display was the result of funds donated to the cause by several sources including the Quinte Field Naturalists. Denice Wilkins coordinated the project with the assistance of Elizabeth Churcher (who mapped out the planting and donated plants grown from seeds of plants from her own garden). Additional plants were purchased from two local nurseries Natural Themes and Stonepath Greenhouse. The plants were then planted by teams of volunteers under the direction of Denice Wilkins. Crucially, municipal staff water the gardens once a week to keep them looking fresh and vibrant.



Citizen Science

Many QFN members contribute to citizen science such as ebird and iNaturalist.



Black Witch (Sept. 5. Andrea Kingsley), Wood Frog (Aug. 23. Robert Ormston), Rusty Blackbird (Oct. 4. Kyle Blaney)

QFN at Community Events

Notes and Pictures Contributed by John Lowry

June 7 – South Shore Fest

Quinte Field Naturalist members Lori Borthwick and John Lowry staffed a booth at the South Shore Joint Initiative's "South Shore Fest", held Saturday, June 7th, at the Mariners Park Museum in South Bay, Prince Edward County. The event was designed to draw attention to the natural beauty of the County's South Shore. A variety of information booths were on hand including the Prince Edward County Field Naturalists, the Kingston Field Naturalists, Quinte Conservation, the South Shore Joint Initiative and the Nature Conservancy of Canada.



VISITORS TO THE QFN TENT ON
DISCOVERY DAY.

August 12 – Discovery Day at Vanderwater Conservation Area

Quinte Field Naturalists participated in Quinte Conservation's 'Discovery Day' held at Vanderwater Conservation Area. QFN hosted a free plant giveaway which included five different native species generously donated by Natural Themes Native Plant Nursery in Frankford.

It was a wonderful for all! Thank you to all who helped run the QFN tent and to all folks who came out to enjoy the event! 🌸



August 29 – Community Day at the Quinte Exhibition

Do you notice how many pictures of events show Lori? They are taken by John. They would appreciate some help at future events.

Please contact Lori. lborthwick@sympatico.ca.

Tree Committee Report

Submitted by Greg Parsons

Hi everyone!

What an amazing year this has been for QFN and for nature!

On behalf of the Tree Committee, I would like to extend a heartfelt THANK YOU to everyone who has played any part in our efforts to rebuild nature in our community. I know many of you helped in so many different ways, even without lifting a shovel.

This past weekend we finished our third, **yes third**, planting event in just over 2 weeks!

Cascade Park, Belleville

On Sept 19th we partnered with [Quinte Conservation](#), [Tree Canada](#), **LCBO** and 62 students from **Parkdale Public School** to plant 15 large trees and 350 smaller potted trees and shrubs in Cascade park. We added a number of wetland plants along the edge of Potter's Creek, which runs through the park. The following day The **City of Belleville** planted another 320 trees and shrubs. Cascade Park has seen quite an addition to its botanical diversity this Fall!



Clifford 'Sonny' Belch Park, Belleville

On **October 3**, together with the **City of Belleville** we planted a wildflower meadow consisting of over 1,850 perennial wildflowers in the center loop of Clifford 'Sonny' Belch Park with the help of over 90 students from **St. Theresa's High school**.

I should note that we purchased the wildflowers for this planting with funds raised at last May's plant sale. We hope to do more next year as we continue our yearly **Plant Sale**



Fundraiser. (That's a subtle reminder to anyone splitting perennials at home this month, to save some for our plant sale May 16, 2026!)

And finally, on **October 4** we partnered with [Tree Canada](#), [Bayview Home Hardware](#), [Rotary](#) and the [Bird Friendly City](#) team to plant 3 sides of the new toboggan hill at [Clifford Sonny Belch Park](#). We planted 360 fruit bearing native shrubs, which will not only hold the soil in place, but will provide habitat for birds and small mammals. We also purchased another 83 shrubs and 20 large trees which are yet to be delivered and will be planted by the City of Belleville next week.

Before both plantings, we went into the schools and gave short presentations about QFN and why planting native plants is so important. Students received instructions on how to plant a tree properly – and the teachers involved continued the lessons after we left. We are truly planting “seeds of change” as well as plants.

One of the things I like about these events is that we always have new people coming out to help, with many of them joining QFN and others making financial donations to our planting efforts.

(If you are wondering, you can send an e-transfer to QFNnature@gmail.com and put 'Trees' in the message field.)

Every one of you has played a part in planting these gifts to nature. Whether you helped plant, organize, found sponsors or donations or helped to spread the word, you are all amazing! We could not have accomplished all this without you. **THANK YOU!!**

Greg Parsons, Tree Committee Chair