

THE WOODLAND OBSERVER

FEBRUARY 2016

Nipissing
Naturalists
Club



THE WOODLAND OBSERVER

From the editor:

Off to a good start

As predicted in the last newsletter, January did indeed turn out to be an exciting month for the Nipissing Naturalists Club.

At our Annual General Meeting (AGM) in January, Fred Pinto, President, talked about all the activities and events that were held in 2015 and there were certainly a lot. These events and activities are itemized in text and photos in this newsletter.

Also at the AGM, Dick Tafel announced that our application for a plaque at Pimisi Bay honouring Louise de Kiriline Lawrence had been accepted by Ontario Heritage Trust. It is a well-deserved plaque which finally commemorates a great lady, one of the most famous women in our area. Lots to read about Louise in this newsletter.

A Nature Film Festival was held in late January at Nipissing University Theatre. This Festival featuring many interesting documentaries was a fundraiser for *Forests without Borders*, of which Fred is co-founder and currently Chair.

Thanks to all the volunteers who helped make the Annual General Meeting a success and especially to all those volunteers who helped make the year a success. Volunteers play an important role in any organization or club. Remember everyone has something special to offer, so please offer your help in any way you can. It will be appreciated, especially by Fred who deserves kudos for all he does to ensure we meet our objectives. I appreciate Fred's help and all the contributors' help in putting together this newsletter. Please send me articles, personal nature stories and photos at any time. If they can't make one issue, they can always make another.

This issue also contains an article by Lori Anderson on some of the places Bill Steer recommends we see on our journeys through Northern Ontario. Because there are so many places he recommends, there will be a second part, written by Debra Johnson, in March's issue. Lori, who was the compiler of the Christmas Bird Count, also provides a summary of the CBC.

The 25th anniversary of Laurier Woods has now come to an end, but the preserve with its trails and flora and fauna will continue to provide joy to many for many more years to come. Dick Tafel conducted the last guided walk celebrating the 25th year, informing participants how the preserve came to be. You can read his article on the acquisition of the various sections of Laurier Woods. **(For those who may not realize it, you can zoom in to read the newspaper articles copied in this newsletter and to better see Dick's map.)**

THE WOODLAND OBSERVER

And because the cover features a Snowy Owl, this one seen on Purdon Line in Powassan in 2014 when the irruption was at its height, there is a brief article on the Snowy Owl, complete with a video taken by club member, Carla Marrin. And former president, Angela Martin, submitted a dramatic story of seven Grey Wolves, four White-tailed Deer and a Bald Eagle.

January also finally brought with it snow for those who like to snowshoe, skate, ski and walk through the woods in the quiet of a winter's day.

February brings with it some special occurrences. Because this year is a Leap Year, one extra day is added to the shortest month of the year. Those born on February 29 can finally celebrate their birthday on the day they were born. A Leap Year usually occurs every four years when the year is divisible by 4, as in 2016. The next Leap Year will be in 2020. We require this extra day to keep our modern Gregorian calendar in alignment with the earth's revolution around the sun. If we didn't do this, we would lose almost six hours off our calendar every year and after 100 years, we would be off by almost 24 days.

February also is the month of The Great Backyard Bird Count. Click on this link for details <http://gbbc.birdcount.org/get-started/> and be sure to participate.

And finally, February 14 is Valentine's Day. Look for signs in nature as illustrated in the photo below.

Renee Levesque, editor



Photo by Renee Levesque



Out of the way places that actually aren't

By Lori Anderson with photos by Bill Steer

Known as an adventurer of Northern Ontario, Bill Steer shared with Nipissing Naturalist Club members some of the natural places he has visited and written about, providing inspiration for outings in our region.

Northern Ontario is richly endowed with such places, and below are four of the many places Bill shared with members during his December presentation.

The Eau Claire Gorge Conservation Area, a short drive from North Bay, is a spectacular destination in any season (see photo above). The Amable du Fond flows between steep rock walls in a dramatic series of rapids and waterfalls. A self-guided 1.9 km interpretive trail details the natural and human history of the area, including a log slide and dam built on the property in the 1870s for the Mackey Lumber Company. A logger's cabin found along the trail was reconstructed in 1989.

THE WOODLAND OBSERVER

From Highway 17, travel east towards Mattawa. Turn onto Highway 630 and follow the signs. The entrance to the Gorge is on the right-hand side. A visit in winter can be made by snowshoe.

North of the city, other wonders can be easily accessed. At **Temagami**, one can climb the 100-foot fire tower at the top of **Caribou Mountain** and enjoy a view stretching 40 km over White Bear Forest with its stands of old growth pine. Surrounding waterways, Finlayson Park, Portage Bay and remnants of the old Ferguson Highway can be viewed from this fine vantage. Hiking trails provide the opportunity to see the ancient giant pines. (See also the article by Karen Major in the November 2015 issue of *The Woodland Observer*.)



Just a little further north up Highway 11, a spectacular view at the end of a short hike can be gained by seeking out the unmarked trail to **Devil's Rock, Haileybury** (see photo above). Look for an unsigned, small parking lot on the left off Highway 567 (Silver Centre Road) about 4.7 km beyond King Street in Haileybury. Here a short 30-minute walk will bring one to a panoramic

THE WOODLAND OBSERVER

view of Lake Temiskaming from the top of a sheer cliff. This inspiring view is the one that provided the setting for the Hardy Boys book, *The House on the Cliff*. A longer and gentler three-km. scenic trail to this vista can be found in Bucke Park, off Highway 567.

West of North Bay, the rocks look different and there are many great ways to best appreciate this fact.

A day hike up **Killarney**'s renowned hiking trail, **The Crack**, will provide exercise and one of the most exciting natural experiences to be had. After a walk through forest, past sparkling lakes, you will find yourself navigating around boulders and hopping from rock to rock. You will then enter the four-metre wide divide to marvel at the magnitude of the towering rock walls rising some 15 metres high on either side of the trail. This is "The Crack", but once through it, one will be treated to one of the most spectacular views in all of Killarney Provincial Park. From the great bald top of one of the La Cloche Mountains, the view is a panorama of colour – inland lakes, rolling white hills and the vast coastline of Georgian Bay (see photo below). Choose a clear day and pack a lunch to best enjoy this hard-earned reward.





Manitoulin Island owes much of its incredible natural beauty to its rocks. The intriguing landscape here results from the action of glaciers and rivers on the ancient bedrock. Alvars, which are globally rare, can be found on Manitoulin (see photo above). These are naturally open areas of carbonate rock with little or no vegetation. This rock is easily dissolved by water, creating unusual karst landforms. The bedrock barrens are home to unique ecosystems not found outside the Great Lakes Basin. A great place to view the curious formations and vegetation of the Alvar is off Highway 551, west of Mindemoya, by making a left hand turn onto Monument Road.

Other points of natural interest on Manitoulin Island include the Cup and Saucer Hiking Trail, dramatic cliff top views, Bridal Falls and the beach at Misery Bay. In fact, this special Island has such unique natural beauty, history and culture, one should allow at least a few days to explore. Even arriving or leaving is an adventure in itself – by car ferry over the crystal blue waters of Georgian Bay or by road over the historic Swing Bridge at Little Current.

These are just a very few of Bill Steer's many suggestions for a Northern adventure. Many more can be found on Bill's own website www.steertonorthernontario.ca.

Following Bill's presentation, the audience shared the locations of personal special places of nature and, not surprisingly, many were in our own backyards. How fortunate we are to live in Northern Ontario!

A modern history of Laurier Woods

By Dick Tafel

On December 5, 2015, in mild weather and as part of the 25th anniversary walks that were held from May to December, I led a large group of local residents on a two-hour trek through Laurier Woods. My main purpose was to explain how these 240 acres became the protected nature preserve it is today.

It all began in 1990 when Nipissing Naturalists Club's then-president, Ted Price, ultimately persuaded the City of North Bay not to develop the area, but to help the Club obtain the land as a preserve.

Prior to the City's involvement, Geri Openshaw and I came up with the name *Laurier Woods*, then accessible from the end of Laurier Street. As an aside, this area is still not shown on most city maps.

At various stops along the main paths, I described the sections of land that were obtained over the past 25 years. The first one was the most humorous. It resulted from an intercession by past mayor, Jack Burrows, as a result of a serious squabble caused by a local resident. This resident had obtained from Tembec some nine acres of mostly flood plain and proceeded, with the aid of a backhoe, to destroy the main beaver dam in order to drain the land. Unfortunately for him and fortunately for us, the dam was on City property.

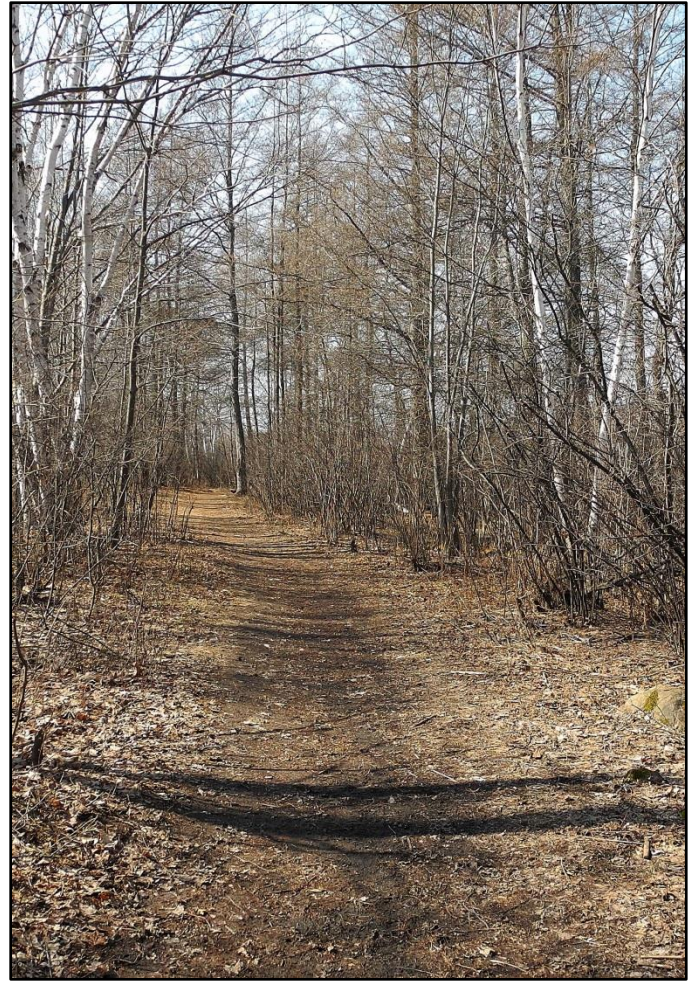


Photo by Renee Levesque



Photo by Kaye Edmonds

THE WOODLAND OBSERVER

What resulted was a deal, concluded in 1996, for \$80,000 to obtain eight acres from the malefactor. The monies were gathered up by me through four different sources: Nipissing Rotary Club, Ontario Nature Conservancy, North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority and the City of North Bay. That then left a major central section of the woods to be obtained from a fellow aptly named Greenwood.

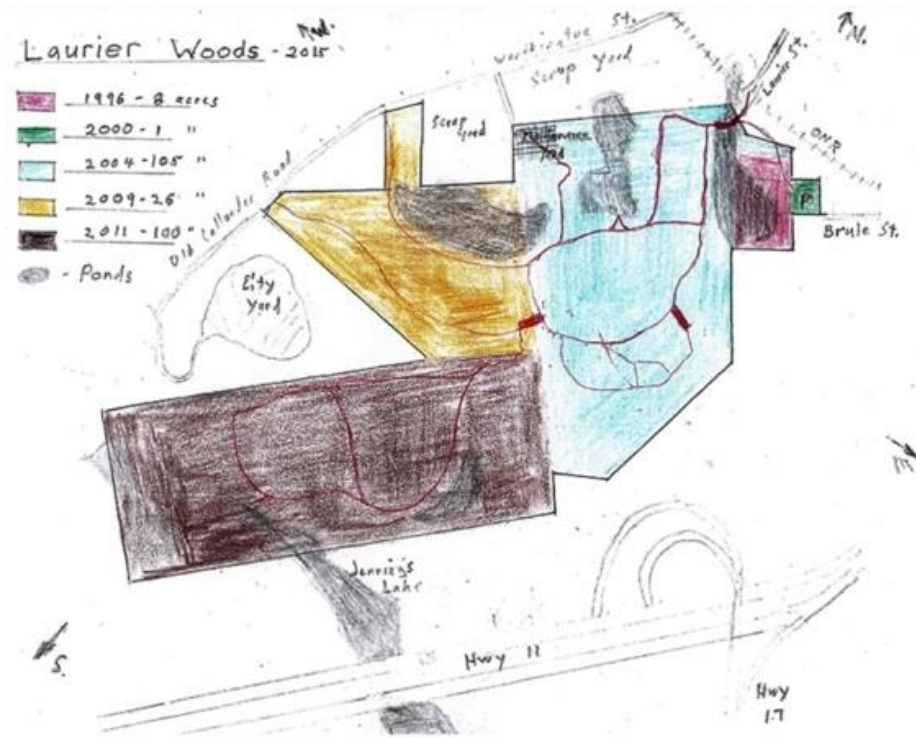
When the now incorporated charitable organization, The Friends of Laurier Woods Inc., could not engineer a suitable price to purchase this major central section, the City, under the leadership of Steve Sjatovic, took over. With the aid of a professional appraisal, the City bought 99 acres from Greenwood for \$200,000. The City wanted to utilize about six acres within the southeast part of this area, near the current Home Depot and Holiday Inn, for tax-earning, commercial purposes.

In 2004, after what seemed an eternity, 105 acres were finally transferred to the joint ownership of The Friends of Laurier Woods Inc. and North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority. The 105 acres also included a smaller section of city-owned tax-default lands near the railway tracks.

In the meantime, Mike Burke, city solicitor, had persuaded Tembec to transfer one acre to the City as a charitable donation. That sector proved to be an excellent location as the main parking lot for entering the woods.

I led the group into the *Yellow Trail* area, now formally named the *Ron Slater Trail* after Ron Slater who voluntarily keeps the trails so marvelously maintained and in great shape. To do so, Ron uses wheelbarrows to spread gravel and shavings collected at the maintenance yard created by the Authority off the Old Callander Road, a fair distance from many of the trail areas.

From this area, connected with the rest by a fine boardwalk constructed mostly by volunteers (as with so much else done within the woods), the group passed the David Haist platform honoring David's son, a budding naturalist, who died at a very young age. It provides a fine view, especially of the newest property acquisition obtained in 2012.



Map hand-drawn by Dick Tafel, showing the various land acquisitions involved in creating present-day Laurier Woods.

THE WOODLAND OBSERVER

This newest acquisition consists of 100 acres obtained for \$75,000. The monies to pay for these 100 acres were obtained within one year by the joint efforts of Chris Mayne, Chairman, and many other of the 21 directors of The Friends of Laurier Woods Inc. Access to it is now by a sturdy new 220-foot boardwalk. At the end of the trail is a sign describing what might well have been the ocean-accessible Georgian Bay Ship Canal.

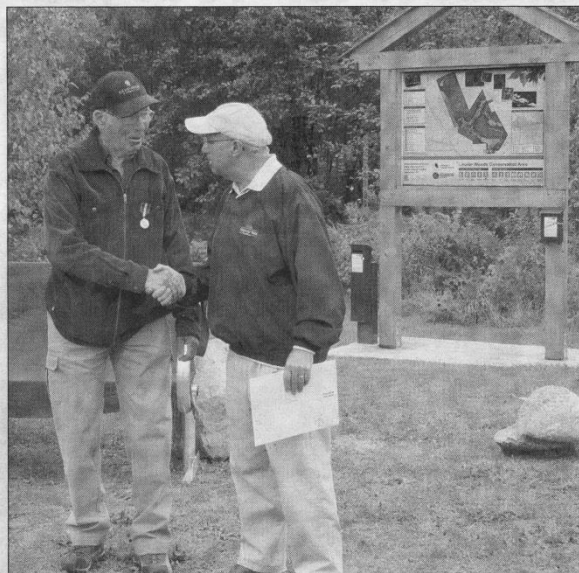
The walkway also provides access to a 26-acre section obtained from the City in 2009. This section protects the marshy area adjacent to the other lands already owned. It also provides access via a circular route, called the *Purple Trail*, to the Old Callander Road.

Other interesting bits of information about Laurier Woods:

1. The first pond seen as one enters from the Brule Street parking lot was once called Billy Goat Pond.
2. The easterly edge of Laurier Woods was once a farm with apple trees and vegetable crops. Around 1956, that usage changed when the entrance to North Bay via Highways 11 and 17 was developed.
3. There was once a busy sawmill at the westerly edge of Laurier Woods which later became a location for scrap yards.
4. A "pest house" harbouring those who had malaria and other communicable diseases existed just south of the scrap yards. It remained in operation until about 1930.

Laurier Woods is not only a gifted area in terms of its fauna and flora, but also in terms of its history and its geology going back a billion years. It should be present hundreds of years from now to be enjoyed by many, just as many have enjoyed walking its trails for the past 25 years.

From urban swamp to nature park



IN SERVICE: MPP Vic Fedeli, right, presents Dick Tafel with his Diamond Jubilee medal. Submitted Photo

On Sept. 15, Tafel went to Laurier Woods park to help unveil a plaque honouring the 125 people or corporations who helped purchase the latest 100 acres of land. Tafel had come to honour the donors, but it turned out that he was also being honoured. To his astonishment Victor Fedeli, Member of Provincial Parliament, presented Tafel with a Queens Diamond Jubilee Medal.

"It was a complete surprise and honour," Tafel says, "And I'm humbled because I'm just one of so many who helped make this

park happen."

Although you can still access Laurier Woods from Laurier Avenue thanks to a new expansion, the best way to get to the park is from Brule Street, which is just a short drive from the junction of Highways 17 and 11. Go north on 11 and turn left (west) on Seymour Street. Turn right (continue west) on Franklin Street and then turn left (south) on Brule Street. There is parking and, because it is a nature preserve, dogs should be on a leash at all times.

*Article from Nipissing News, by
Steve Pitt, November 15, 2012*



Laurier Woods, January 2016, photo by Kaye Edmonds

A bright light on Christmas Day



By Renee Levesque

If you got up early on Christmas morning, as I did to catch the early morning flight to Toronto, you were rewarded with a wonderfully bright full moon, the first full moon on Christmas Day in 38 years.

The above photo was snapped at 5:41 a.m. minutes before I left for the airport and just prior to the moon's peak fullness at 6:11 a.m.

Naturally during the intervening years, there have been full moons during Christmas week, but it is rare to see one on Christmas Day itself.

Not since 1977, when the first *Star Wars* movie was released, has the full moon risen on Christmas Day. Quoting CBC News, it has taken “six *Star Wars* movies for the moon to skywalk back to full illumination on a 25th of December.” (The sixth *Star Wars* movie was released on December 18.)

The next full moon on Christmas Day is not expected until 2034, although there will be a full moon on Boxing Day in 2017.

THE WOODLAND OBSERVER

37th Christmas Bird Count yields 37 species

By Lori Anderson, Compiler

North Bay conducted its 37th Christmas Bird Count (CBC) on Saturday, December 19th.

Strong winds severely hampered attempts to spot birds on the open waters of Lake Nipissing. Temperature on count day averaged -5 C. The sun shone briefly and there were occasional brief snow squalls. Hiking was pleasant only in sheltered areas.

Total species tallied was slightly above average at 37, but the number of individuals counted was slightly low at 2806. There were 15 Field Observers who covered 600 kms by car, on foot and on bicycle. Eleven others watched feeders and were responsible for upping the species number by five.

One feeder attracted a Red-Bellied Woodpecker, a very unusual species for this region at any time of year, and rarely ever making the CBC.

One record was equalled, the high count for the Bald Eagle, at six.

No records were broken and no new species observed.

Finches, Gulls and Waterfowl were well represented. Some good sightings included the Hooded Merganser, Common Loon (seen at right in its winter plumage), Glaucous Gull, Great Black-Backed Gull, and the Gray Jay.



Photo by Donna McQuay

Raptors and Owls were not on the list!

After a cool, windy day's work, field watchers gathered at the warm home of Marc and Irene Buchanan for a delicious potluck and an exciting tally with all the day's tales told.

Thank you Marc and Irene, and thanks to all who participated and made the 37th count a reality.

Approval of LKL plaque caps a fine year

By Renee Levesque

Nipissing Naturalists Club held its annual meeting at the North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority building on January 12, complete with a potluck dinner and a silent auction.

As always, the potluck dinner worked out well, despite no kitchen availability, with enough good food and many different dishes for everyone.

There were so many items for auction that there was not enough room on the table to hold them all. Thanks to everyone who donated some great items. The on-line auction with the Louise de Kiriline Lawrence drawing will be set up sometime in March and once up and running, we will be informed by email.

Fred Pinto, President, itemized the events, outings and activities that took place throughout 2015, fulfilling our objectives to observe and enjoy nature around us through field trips, meetings and discussion; to stimulate and increase personal and public interest in and understanding of our natural history; to promote the conservation and wise use of our natural resources; and to cooperate with other organizations and agencies having the same or similar objectives.

The events and outings Fred mentioned are itemized on the next two pages, followed by two pages of photo collages of some of the year's activities.

An exciting piece of news was announced by Dick Tafel who recently received a letter from Ontario Heritage Trust approving our application to recognize Louise de Kiriline Lawrence, contingent on the completion of a cost-sharing agreement. Dick will be discussing this agreement with the Trust's Manager of Education and Community Program and reporting back to us. It is hoped the plaque can be installed this summer at Pimisi Bay.

Dick, who seemed to have failed to report on Bird Wing activities and events last year, thankfully reported on them this year: seven monthly meetings; outings from May to August; a landfill site visit in November; twelve monthly Bird Bashes; the owl survey in April; the Great Canadian Birdathon in May; the Christmas Bird Count in December; participation throughout the year in other Bird Studies Canada surveys and counts; and eleven monthly reports/newsletters.

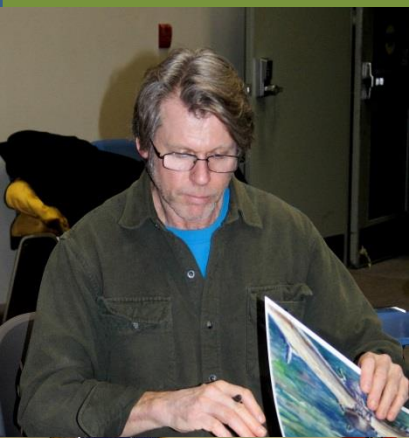
The Treasurer's Report was not complete, but will be made available for us to view at a later date and will be printed in a subsequent issue of *The Woodland Observer*.

We have two new Board members for 2016, Oriana Pokorny and Sarah Wheelan, and there is room for one more. See Marc Buchan, Vice-president, if you wish to join the Board. Nicole Richardson, a Board member for the past two years, resigned from the Board as she is busy with her university studies. We thank her for her commitment and input. Over the next few issues, I hope to provide a short biography of all the Board members.



Photos by Kaye Edmonds

Annual General Meeting: Food, fanfare and festivity



2015 was an active year for club members



The Nipissing Naturalists Club met its 2015 objectives by:

1. Holding nine **monthly meetings** with guest speakers:

- February, **Sonje Bols**: What research has shown us in Algonquin Provincial Park
- March, **Joseph Boivin**: Asleep at the switch: How seed dormancy helps some plants to survive
- April, **Peter Nosko**: Moose and Balsam Fir in Gros Morne National Park
- May: **Lesley Lovett Doust**: Endangered Species, Endangered Spaces: The ecology of the Eastern Prickly Pear Cactus
- June, **Mark Kulhberg**: Forestry is not clear cut.
- September, **Sonje Bols**: Bank Swallows in Canada's Boreal North: past and present biogeography
- October, **Maxime Lefebvre**: The Lady Slipper and native orchids
- November, **Rebecca Geauvreau**: Monitoring bats
- December, **Bill Steer**: Local natural landmarks

2. Having the following **outings**:

- A very successful second annual Louise de Kiriline Nature Festival at Laurier Woods
- Locating in West Nipissing the largest maternal roost of endangered Little Brown Bat
- Woodlot management visit to Sundridge, Ontario Woodland Assoc.
- Bird banding visit to Hilliardton Marsh.
- Grassland birds visit to Carden Alvar.
- Haskap winery visit.
- Honey farm visit.
- Owl banding visit to Hilliardton Marsh.

THE WOODLAND OBSERVER

3. Distributing two **news releases** to the local media regarding the Nature Festival and the bat house building event.
4. Having four **radio and newspaper interviews** related to club activities.
5. Sponsoring an award of \$50.00 at the **North Bay Regional Science Fair**. The 2015 winner was Payton Hack, now living in New Liskeard.
6. Working with The Friends of Laurier Woods Inc. and North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority to host **monthly guided walks** from May to December on different aspects of nature in Laurier Woods Conservation Area.
7. Organizing with 13 other partners the 2nd annual **Nature Festival**, with over 200 people in attendance.
8. Active birding with the **Bird Wing** Group.
9. Participating in and helping set a world record for building the largest number of **bat houses** in one day, the only Ontario group to do so.
10. Sponsoring and approving funding for \$5,000.00 for the installation of a **provincial historic plaque** to recognize naturalist Louise De Kiriline Lawrence. A biography of Louise follows in subsequent pages.
11. Applying for funds for **bat monitoring** equipment.
12. Maintaining the club **website and Facebook page**.
13. Publishing 10 monthly issues of the **newsletter**, *The Woodland Observer*.

The photos on the next two pages provide a visual view of our outings, events and presentations. Photos are by Alex DeBruyn, Kaye Edmonds, Craig Hurst, Renee Levesque, Fred Pinto and **Dawn Sherman who took the photo of the Eastern Wolf**. Dawn works at the Algonquin Visitor Centre and is a Natural Heritage Education Technician, Algonquin Provincial Park, Ontario Parks.

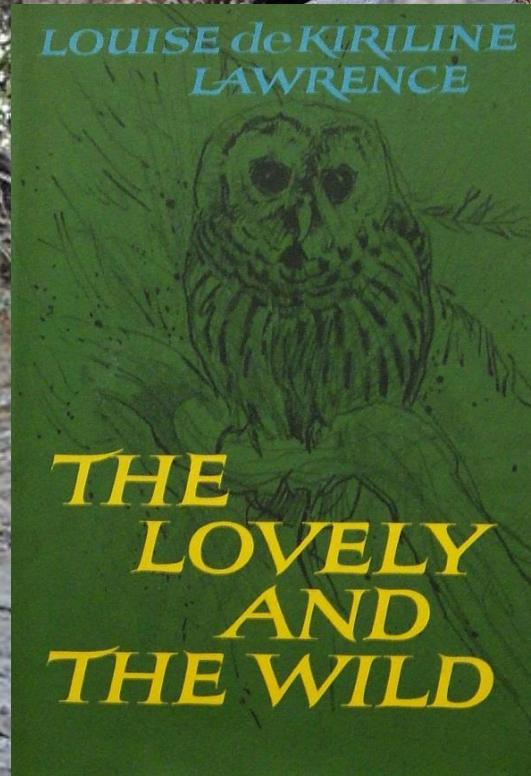


Join us annually every 3rd Saturday in August for the

Louise de Kiriline Lawrence Nature Festival

in the heart of the city at
Laurier Woods Conservation Area

Hosted By:





A glimpse into the life of Louise de Kiriline Lawrence

By Joanne Zytaruk

Louise de Kiriline Lawrence was born in 1894 on the Baltic coast of Sweden to a Danish mother, Hillevid Neergaard, and a Swedish father, Sixten Flach, whose family was counted among Swedish aristocracy. From her father, Louise learned to love nature. At the window of their villa overlooking the sea, this extraordinary woman did her first bird-watching.

Recalling her father's advice to be "hardy and fearless", seventeen-year-old Louise Flach turned her back on social life at the Royal Palace in Sweden and entered a Red Cross nursing school. Upon graduation, she headed for a Red Cross enemy prison camp in Denmark where she met Russian Lieutenant Gleb Nicoleyevich Kirilin who would become her husband. The story of Louise's marriage to Gleb (hence her name Kiriline), their flight from enemy soldiers across the Northern Front of Russia during the 1917 Revolution, her imprisonment in Moscow, and the death of her husband are recalled in the beautifully written *Another Winter, Another Spring: A Love Remembered* (1977).

In 1927, Louise Flach de Kiriline traveled across Canada with the intention of becoming a nurse in the mountains of Banff, Alberta. However, a Swedish embassy official directed the multilingual nurse to Bonfield, near North Bay. As district nurse, she soon became well-known, not only for her nursing ability and her aristocratic demeanour, but also for her habit of travelling to and from house calls by dogsled.

In May 1935, the nursing skills of Madame Louise de Kiriline, as she was called, drew the attention of Dr. A.R. Dafoe of Callander, resulting in her becoming head nurse to the Dionne quintuplets for which she received the Jubilee Medal from King George V. She recounts her experience in *The Quintuplets' First Year* (1936). When the Ontario government assumed guardianship of the quintuplets and put them on display, Louise left the children and later regretted how the Dionne parents and siblings had been excluded from the girls' lives.

Shortly afterwards, Louise married Leonard Lawrence, a local carpenter and Ontario



THE WOODLAND OBSERVER

government employee. They purchased ten acres of land at the edge of Pimisi Bay on the Mattawa River, just west of the town of Mattawa. Louise called the site “typical in character of the Canadian Shield—rough, rocky, unyielding and magnificent.” Together she and Len built a lovely log home where, upon Len’s departure to fight in the war, Louise dedicated her time to observations of the natural world. (Her home is depicted at right.) And observant she certainly was. During a chilly May day in 1952, over a fourteen-hour period, she counted 22,197 songs of a single Red-Eyed Vireo. It was the first time anybody had counted its songs. *A Comparative Life-History*

Study of Four Species of Woodpeckers, Ornithological Monographs No. 5 issued by the American Ornithologists’ Union in April 17, 1967, is another example of Louise’s meticulous observations. It includes detailed descriptions and drawings of the territoriality, movements, communication, pairing, sexual and ritualistic behaviour, breeding, and nestling of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Northern Flickers, and Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers at Pimisi Bay.



Although fluent in Swedish, Danish, French, and Russian, Louise chose to write in English, a language perfectly suited to her scientific studies as well as her lyrical personal recollections. As she became more acquainted with the details of the varied natural life at her doorstep, she began to write about it. Her first book on the subject was *The Log House Nest*, published in 1945. It described the surroundings of her new home, the balsam fir, the spruce bogs, and, in particular, the birds that came to the vicinity. She had already written various reports and articles, many published by the American Audubon Society. She became acquainted with other Canadian nature writers, P.A. Taverner and W.A. Godfrey of Ottawa, and Robert Nero, a Winnipeg wildlife specialist.

In 1976, she wrote *Mar: A Glimpse Into the Life of a Bird*, a stirring tale about the life of one Yellow-bellied Sapsucker which she observed with extraordinary detail and care. *To Whom the Wilderness Speaks*, published in 1980, describes deer and squirrels and birds near the log house and garnered her the Francis H. Kortright Outdoor Writing Award sponsored by the Canadian National Sportsmen’s Fund. In 1969, she was recognized by the John Burroughs Association for the beauty and grace of her writing in *The Lovely and the Wild*, the first Canadian to be so honoured. Other recipients of that prize are such famous naturalists as Rachel Carson, Roger Tory Peterson and Ernest Thomson Seton.

That same year, she was also presented with the prestigious Sir Charles G. D. Roberts Award by the Canadian Authors Association. She became an elected member of the American Ornithologists’ Union, and was granted an Honorary Doctor of Letters Degree from Laurentian University.

THE WOODLAND OBSERVER

The books of Louise de Kiriline Lawrence are exquisitely written. She had become captivated by the land of Canada and she expressed beautifully just why we should feel equally captivated. In addition to books, she wrote over 500 reviews and 17 scientific papers, the last at the age of 91. Her awards continued in later years. Her North Bay Humane Society membership inscription reads, *In loving recognition of a life devoted to the study of wildlife...*; the Ontario Nursing Home Association Lifetime Achievement Award of 1986 honoured her *exemplary pioneering spirit*; and at the same ceremony, the City of North Bay presented her with an Outstanding Achievement Award.

Louise de Kiriline Lawrence died in 1992 at the age of 98 in North Bay, shortly after the death of her beloved Len.

We are extremely fortunate to have had within our midst such an outstanding woman ahead of her time in sounding a warning about our environment. Her loghouse nest, as Louise called her home, is located on the northwesterly shore of Pimisi Bay, just west of Mattawa. Louise had no children.

It is wonderful we are now able to honour Louise de Kiriline Lawrence with an Ontario Heritage Trust plaque to be installed at Pimisi Bay next door to Louise's loghouse nest.



(This article has been edited to include updated plaque approval.)

Editor's Notes: I submitted a Bibliography, as well a list of archival material at Canada Archives, to Ontario Heritage Trust as part of the application form. If you wish to see both or either of these lists, please email me directly at rlevesque1948@gmail.com.

*Although not nature-related per se, I would highly recommend Louise de Kiriline Lawrence's autobiography, **Another Winter Another Spring, A Love Remembered**. It is a poignant memoir of Louise's early days, an exciting adventure story of her time in Russia during the Revolution and a tender love story honouring her first husband. It is very vivid and very personal, beautifully written and hard to put down. It and some of Louise's other books were re-published and can be ordered through Natural Heritage, Dundurn: <https://www.dundurn.com/authors/louise-de-kiriline-lawrence>*

Louise de Kiriline Lawrence memorabilia

By Renee Levesque

In 2014 when Bird Wing invited Mike Burrell, Bird Studies Canada, to speak to us about eBird, I ordered as a gift for Mike a First Edition of Louise de Kiriline Lawrence's book, *The Lovely and the Wild*. I glanced through the book, reading chapters here and there, and was so impressed with it that I ordered a First Edition for myself. When it arrived, I was delighted to find it had been signed by Louise in 1972 and dedicated to a Pearl Torrance. Also inside was a 1975 *Nugget* article on the North Bay Women's Centre declaring Louise its Woman of the Year. I

was living in North Bay at that time and was a member of the Women's Centre, but unfortunately I do not recall this. Sometimes there are so many other things going on in one's life, such as raising a family and getting one's career off the ground, that other things that should have left an impression didn't. So I am very pleased that four decades later, as a member of Nipissing Naturalists Club and Bird Wing, I am part of honouring this great lady. The *Nugget* article from

September 27, 1975, and the dedication signed by Louise are below.



Louise de Kiriline Lawrence

★★★★ ★★★★★

A gracious lady, probably best-known as the author of *The Lovely and the Wild*, has been chosen September's Woman of the Month.

Speaking with a slight Swedish accent, Madame Louise de Kiriline Lawrence spoke to *The Nugget* at her Pimisi Bay home in regard to her past accomplishments and future plans.

Madame de Kiriline Lawrence was born in Sweden about 75 years ago. She became a translator for the American Military Mission during the Russian Revolution and was then placed in charge of the Russian Military Hospital. Following this, she became a delegate of the Swedish Red Cross Expedition to the Volga during the famine of 1922.

Madame Lawrence then came to Canada and served with the Red Cross at an outpost nursing service for a length of time.

Author-naturalist Madame Lawrence spoke of the books she has written and talked briefly about her new book "Nothing but This."

"I can't tell you much about it. I can't tell the story but I can say that it is a story about my life. I really can't say much more than that. I wouldn't want to give away the details of the book," she smiles.

The book is at the publishers at present and, according to Madame Lawrence, will be printed in the near future.

McGraw-Hill of New York, publishers of *The Lovely and the Wild*, will publish Madame Lawrence's new book and have described the script as an intense love story.

Madame Lawrence's book, *The Lovely and the Wild*, which won her the John Burroughs Medal for nature writers in 1969, gave a brief insight into the author's life.

Her book told the story of her life with nature from her childhood in Sweden, through the tragedy of the Russian Revolution and her years in Canada.

She has lived with her husband, Leonard L. Lawrence, a retired civil servant, on Pimisi Bay, about 24 miles east of North Bay, for 42 years.

Madame Lawrence met her first husband, a Russian officer, during the First World War.

During the Russian Revolution of 1917 he was killed fighting with the White Russian forces in Northern Russia while she worked as a front-line nurse.

She came to Toronto in 1927 but soon headed for North Bay and Kirland Lake as a nurse with the Canadian Red Cross.

She speaks Danish, Swedish, Russian, French and English but writes in English, "because it is a beautiful language."

Madame Lawrence was the first Canadian to receive the John Burroughs Memorial Medal and has also won medals from the Canadian Author's Association and the Charles G. D. Roberts Society.

She was the first Canadian woman to be awarded elective membership in the American Ornithology Union and is recognized as a leading world authority on wild birds and their behavior.

To date, Madame Lawrence has written *The Quintuplets First Years*; *The Log House Nest*; *The Lovely and the Wild* and *Comparative Life History and Study of Four Species of Woodpeckers*.

Her book *Nothing but This* and another nature story she has compiled are to be published shortly. Clarke-Irwin will publish her recently completed nature story.

In 1971 Laurentian University, Sudbury, awarded Madame Lawrence with an honorary Doctor of Letters degree, and through the years her work has received high vocal and written praise.

For Madame Lawrence the years have brought much success but, more than that, she projects a quiet contentment in her actions that only self-acceptance can bring.

She laughs quietly when she says her "autobiographical love story" took 30 to 40 years to complete, and is quick to point out that she never has mastered complete usage of the English language.

"I still struggle with sentence structure but I love trying," she says.

While Madame Lawrence says she has not really been involved in International Women's Year or its objectives, she feels the year has had noted effect on society.

"It has changed the image of women, and more than that, it has had some effect in turning attention to things that are not as they should be.

"It (the special year) has brought about increased awareness, I am sure."

THE LOVELY AND THE WILD

It is with special pleasure
I sign this book for
Pearl Torrance

Louise de Kiriline Lawrence
1972

The Deer, the Wolves and the Eagle

By Angela Martin

January 6 was an exciting morning for us!

While having our morning coffee, my husband, Gary, and I spotted four White-tailed Deer, two adults and two young, go out onto the ice of the West Arm of Lake Nipissing from the southeast point of Musky Island. However, to avoid the glare ice, they went back to shore and moved a little to the west where they cautiously crossed, staying on the hard-packed snow as much as possible. They safely made the crossing to the north shore of Mashkinonje Provincial Park.

Half an hour later, we spotted more wildlife on the ice. A check with binoculars confirmed a pack of seven Grey Wolves tracking the deer's route. We have seen singular wolves before, but this was the first time we observed a pack.



Photo by Angela Martin

At one point, we saw a wolf down on the ice. It was the wolf on the far right in the above photo. The wolf, second from the right in the same photo, had pinned this wolf down. After that experience, the pinned wolf hung well behind the pack. The wolves tracked the deer to the deer's entry point into the park.

THE WOODLAND OBSERVER

Ten minutes after the wolves entered the park, a second-year Bald Eagle flew from the north part of Musky Island following the deer and wolves to the park.



Editor's notes:

Angela Martin is Past President of the Nipissing Naturalists Club, Ontario Nature and Friends of Mashkinonje.

*Don Gossett is a photographer with **The International Wolf Centre**, a Centre “which advances the survival of wolf population by teaching about wolves, their relationship to wildlands and the humans role in their future.” Permission was received from the Centre to use the photo above. To learn more about the Centre, visit their website at <http://www.wolf.org/>*

*On December 17, 2015, Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources proposed to remove the game seal requirement for wolves and coyotes in Northern Ontario, meaning anyone with a small game license would be permitted to kill up to two wolves and an unlimited number of coyotes per year. This step is being proposed because moose populations are in decline. Comments concerning the proposal were to have been sent to the Ministry by January 18. Some members of Nipissing Naturalists Club received notice of the proposal through **Ontario Nature** and were able to comment by the deadline. To view Ontario Nature's comment, see their blog at: <http://www.ontarionature.org/connect/blog/a-shot-in-the-dark>*

The Snowy Owl

By Renee Levesque

Since its irruption in 2014, the Snowy Owl has captured the public's attention and may become Canada's national bird.

It is currently in second place with 6,660 votes, about 2,000 less than the first-place Common Loon, and only about 200 ahead of the third-place Gray Jay.



Photo by Renee Levesque

An owl of the open tundra, the Snowy Owl preys chiefly on small tundra rodents called Lemmings, but will also eat Arctic Hare and Ptarmigan, the official bird of Nunavut. When not on its nesting grounds, it will eat various small mammals and birds. Because there is continuous daylight in the Arctic during the summer months, the Snowy Owl is not an owl that hunts exclusively at night.

In the winter when darkness reigns in the Arctic, the Snowy Owl heads south, but in the last couple of years when the Lemming population has been in short supply, it has headed further south than it normally would.

In 2014, a great irruption year that caused excitement throughout central and southern Ontario and New York State, it was even spotted as far south as Jacksonville, Florida, a surprising sight on the beach as seen in the **photo on the next page taken by Roger Newell**, who twice drove over 200 miles from his home further south to see the Snowy.

North Bay has had its share of Snowy Owls during the winters of 2014 and 2015 and it looks as if 2016 will not disappoint. One was seen along the waterfront in December and one recently in downtown Powassan. An interesting sighting was captured on **video by Nipissing Naturalist Club member, Carla Marrin**, at Sunset Park in early December. Click on the link below to see Carla's video and watch a Common Raven quite perturbed at the unexpected presence of a Snowy Owl which remained quite unperturbed:

<https://www.facebook.com/nipissingnaturalistsclub/?fref=nf>

Also watch this video of a Snowy Owl that went viral when captured by a traffic cam on January 3 in Montreal:

<http://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/montreal-snowy-owl-caught-on-traffic-cam-goes-viral>



Upcoming speakers at monthly meetings

As you will see below and on the next page, a roster of informative and interesting speakers has been lined up for February, March, April and May.

Meetings take place the second Tuesday of every month starting at 7:00 p.m. in the auditorium of Casselholme.

On Tuesday, February 10, Kathi Hunnisett, marine biologist and veterinary technician, will present *A Summer of Sand, Sun and Sea Turtles*, based on her research in Panama of Leatherback Sea Turtles (seen at right). Kathi has a strong love and passion for the ocean and its creatures, especially sea turtles. In her talk, she will share her knowledge of sea turtles and how they have been affected negatively by humans, but how we, through education and conservation, can become a positive force.

On Tuesday, March 10, several students from Nipissing University will describe their experiences during their school trip to the Galapagos Islands. What can they tell us about the creature on the right, *photographed by Fred Pinto* who took the trip with the students?



THE WOODLAND OBSERVER

On **Tuesday, April 12**, Paul Smylie will talk about *Bicycling the Dempster Highway: Whitehorse to Inuvik*.

Last summer, Paul spent two weeks cycling alone along Canada's only all-weather road that crosses the Arctic Circle. Learn from Paul about his amazing journey and what it is to cycle alone along a gravel road in the Arctic.

On **Tuesday, May10**, Larry Dyke, retired geologist, Geological Survey of Canada, will talk about *The Role of Geology in Creating Wetlands, Havens for Animals*, focusing on the Okavango Delta of Botswana and the Hudson Bay Lowlands of Canada.

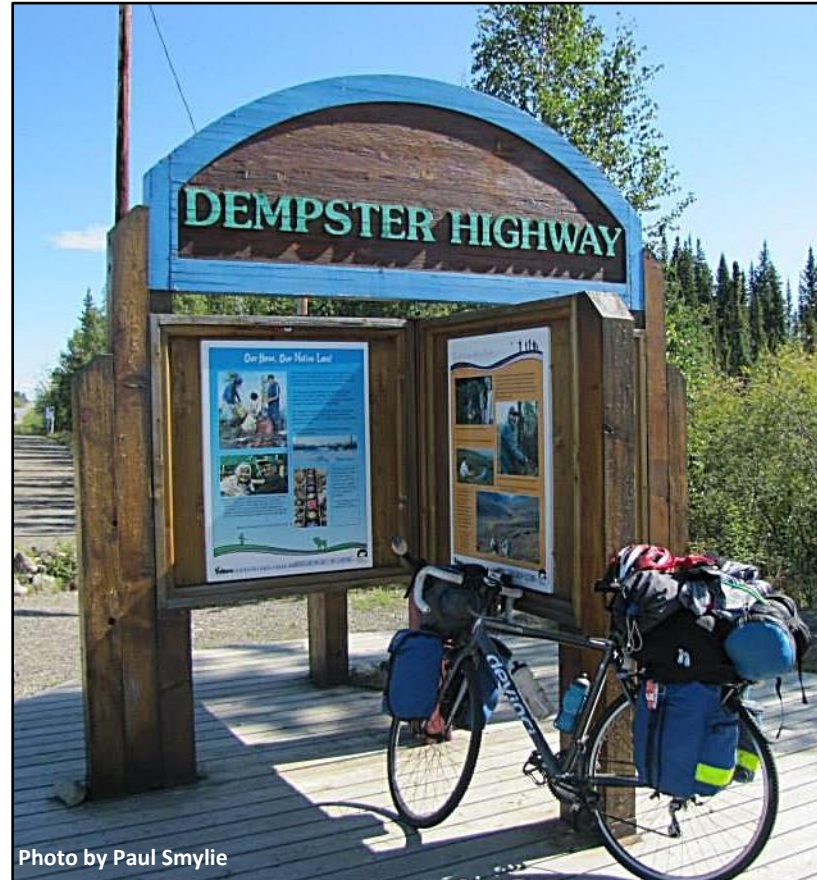


Photo by Paul Smylie



Photo by Renee Levesque

THE WOODLAND OBSERVER



Board of Directors, 2016

Fred Pinto, President: fredpinto1@gmail.com 705-476-9006

Marc Buchanan, Vice-president

Joe Boivin

Sonje Bols-Hill

Irene Kasch

Mary Marrs

Stephen Mitchell

April Phelps

Oriana Pokorny

Paul Smylie

Sarah Wheelan

Past Presidents

Dick Tafel

Ted Price

Steph Romaniuk

Angela Martin

Greg Boxwell

Jeremy St. Onge

THE WOODLAND OBSERVER

Bird Wing

Dick Tafel, Chairman: rtafel@sympatico.ca. 705-472-7907

Gary Sturge, Treasurer

Renee Levesque, Bird Wing Scribe. A Bird Wing newsletter is published each month, except December, and sent to members by email and posted on the Nipissing Naturalists Club website, <http://www.nipnats.com/> under Newsletters and Bird Wing.

The Woodland Observer is published electronically each month from September to June and sent to members by email and posted on the Nipissing Naturalists Club website as above.

Editor: Renee Levesque: rlevesque1948@gmail.com

Contributors this issue: Lori Anderson, Alex DeBruyn, Kaye Edmonds, Craig Hurst, Renee Levesque, Carla Marrin, Angela Martin, Donna McQuay, Fred Pinto, Paul Smylie, Dick Tafel and Joanne Zytaruk.

Special thanks to Ron Tozer and Dawn Sherman, Algonquin Provincial Park, for the use of Dawn's photo of the Eastern Wolf, part of the collage highlighting 2015 activities, in particular Sonje Bols' presentation last February on Algonquin Park; The International Wolf Centre for permission to use Don Gossett's photo of the Grey Wolf; and to *Harrowsmith*, No. 83 (1989), pp. 72-81, "To Whom the Wilderness Speaks: The remarkable life of Louise de Kiriline Lawrence", by Marilyn Mohr, from which the two photos of Louise were taken.

Membership Fees

Yearly Nipissing Naturalist Club membership fees are: single, \$20.00; family, \$30.00.

There is an **additional \$5.00 membership fee for Bird Wing** which meets the **fourth Tuesday of every month in the auditorium of the North Bay Public Library from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m.** This fee is paid directly to Bird Wing.



The Nipissing Naturalist Club is affiliated with Ontario Nature: <http://www.ontarionature.org/>.