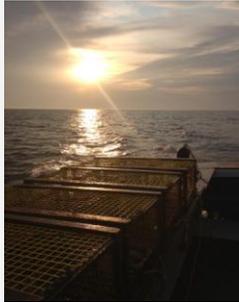


# Souris & Area Watershed News



July 2013 • Issue 39



Photos by Dylan MacIntyre

## What's Inside?

Family Fishing Day	2
Annual General Meeting	2
2013 Funding Partners	3
2013 Angling Regulations	4
All About Basin Head	5
PEI 2014 Find: Eco-Tourism	6
PEI Estuaries	6
SCS Clean Up	7
ELBC Field Trip	7
Presidents Comments	8
Coordinators Comments	8

## Lobster Fundraising Dinner

Traditionally, the Souris & Area Branch of the PEI Wildlife Federation hosted an annual "Wildlife Fundraising Dinner" each fall. Due to extraneous circumstances, our Board of Directors made the unanimous decision to cancel this event. In lieu of this event, we will host a "Lobster Fundraising Dinner" in hopes of capitalizing on the tourist market and promote our PEI lobster.

The lobster dinner will take place on Sunday, August 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at the Eastern Kings Sportsplex. Tickets are \$25 per plate which includes a Souris

& Area Wildlife membership for \$5, at half price. This \$5 portion directly benefits the PEI Wildlife Federation in supporting environmental initiatives across the province.

Sit in and take out options are available with the seating at 5:00 pm and 6:30 pm. Take out will be available for pick up any time after 5:00 pm.

Each plate will include lobster meat, potato salad, coleslaw, roll and dessert. Those who chose to sit in will be treated to an array

of hors d'oeuvres during their seating time. Colville Bay Oysters will be at the event to sell local oysters. Tea and coffee will be served and a cash bar will be available to those of legal age.

There will be wildlife and photo displays, 50/50, door prizes and much more.

Tickets can be purchased in advance by contacting Jill at (902) 687-4115 or via email at [sourisareawildlife@gmail.com](mailto:sourisareawildlife@gmail.com).

A limited amount of tickets will be sold so get yours early to avoid disappointment.

## Memorial Tree Program

The concept of planting a tree in memory of Souris Wildlife Branch members who have passed away has been circulating for quite some time. Two oak trees have been planted in 2011 in memory of David Mullally and Charles McQuaid.

David played a dominant role with the Souris & Area Wildlife Branch serving as President for many years. He was instrumental in introducing Sharp tailed grouse to Eastern PEI. Interestingly enough, there have been many sightings of these in 2012 as they seemed to be flourishing in our area. A tree is planted in his memory at his former residence on the Grant Road.

Charles McQuaid was an avid fly fisherman and

considered Gowan Brae Causeway, Bonshaw, and Big Pond his favorite fishing spots. Charles kept very detailed fishing records including dates, fishing locations, fish species, fish measurements, and tides, among others. A tree is planted in this memory at Gowan Brae.

A subcommittee would be formed under the leadership of Souris & Area Wildlife Director Paul Gallant, called the "Memorial Tree Committee" to implement this program. Upon consultation with the families of deceased members, we propose a Red oak tree be planted in a mutually agreed site. A plaque with honorees name and pertinent information would be laid. A dedication

ceremony would be held at the family's discretion. Further details pertaining to criteria for dedication and number of dedications per year will follow in the upcoming months.



In memory of Charles McQuaid

## Annual Family Fishing Day Cancelled

Each year, we host an annual "Family Fishing Day" at Rollo Bay Pond to promote recreational angling in hopes of encouraging more community members, of all ages, to participate in this great sport. Souris & Area Wildlife members Paul & Faye Gallant own the pond and lease it to Souris & Area Wildlife.

Traditionally, this pond is stocked with native trout species for "catch and release" fishing open to our

members. Unfortunately, with the closure of the fish hatchery stocking the pond was not possible.

This was an ideal fishing preserve, especially for seniors and youth, as it's easily accessible and a bite was virtually guaranteed.

Being said, our management area boasts many other fishing areas which are easily accessible for recreational angling. The Gowan Brae Causeway, MacInnis' Dam, Lakeville

Bridge and Priest Pond are all easily accessible fishing areas with good fishing, among many more.

Remember if you are participating in recreational angling to purchase a license. Licenses for the season can be purchased in addition to five day licenses. Youth under the age of 16 years are not required to obtain a license. Consult the 2013 Angling Summary for further details pertaining to fishing regulations and licensing.

## Annual General Meeting

Souris & Area Wildlife hosted our Annual General Meeting on April 11, 2013 at the Souris Striders Ski Club. The meeting featured regular business including a nomination report, financial report and other arising business.

Three presentations were made at the meeting. Jill MacPhee delivered the first presentation which highlighted the Souris & Area Wildlife's activities within the 2012 calendar year. A copy of this presentation can be

accessed on our website at [www.souriswl.com](http://www.souriswl.com) under the "Activities" section.

Secondly, local amateur photographers Joanne Dunphy and Marcy Robertson gave a presentation on their experience at the "Eagle Watch" in Sheffield Mills, Nova Scotia in winter 2012. Each year, bait piles are placed in a field where dozens of Bald eagles gather to feed. This event attracts large crowds of photographers to capture images of these eagles. The

idea of hosting a similar "birding expedition" in our management area will be explored.

The final presentation was done by local Conservation Officers Trevor MacKinnon and Erin McEvoy pertaining to angling regulations with emphasis on new regulations for 2013.

Thank you to all those who attended the meeting, volunteered in any capacity and supported our efforts in 2012. We look forward to another successful year in 2013.



*"Did you know Basin Head is designated as one of eight "Marine Protected Areas" in Canada? Read further to find out why.*

## 2013-2014 Board of Directors

President : Brian MacDonald  
Vice President: Jimmy MacDonald  
Past President: Joe MacDonald  
Treasurer: Kevin Robertson  
Secretary: Jill MacPhee  
Director: Steve Cheverie  
Director: Paul Gallant  
Director: Billy Gillam  
Director: Fan MacIntyre  
Director: Justin McKinnon  
Director: Fred Ward  
Watershed Coordinator: Fred Cheverie

# 2013-2014 Funding Partners

Souris & Area Wildlife is completely dependent on external partnerships to provide funding to implement environmental restoration measures and related projects. We are fortunate to have formed new partnerships and have continued past partnerships. The following agencies have provided funding to Souris & Area Wildlife for 2013-2014:

## Atlantic Salmon Conservation Foundation



Entering the second year of a three year partnership, funding is provided for activities related to enhancing sustainability and expanding the geographic range of native Atlantic salmon within our rivers.

## Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada



Agriculture and  
Agri-Food Canada

Agriculture et  
Agroalimentaire Canada

Contracts exist for field data collection for two separate agricultural research projects within our management area. This involves weekly, bi weekly and monthly sample collection from surface water, tile drains, wells and lysimeters. Both projects are aiming to determine the effects of fall and spring ploughing on nitrate concentration in groundwater as well as tracking the breakdown on nitrogen in the soil.

## Government of Prince Edward Island



### 1. Department of Environment, Labour & Justice: Watershed Management Fund

Funding is administered to community based watershed groups for watershed planning and management, wildlife and habitat restoration and administrative activities, among others. This fund provides the support to ensure daily business operations are fulfilled in a professional manner.

### 2. Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture & Rural Development: Employment Development Agency

Wage subsidies are provided to hire two supervisors and certified chainsaw operators.

### 3. Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture & Rural Development: Jobs For Youth

Wage subsidies are provided to hire two students for 8 week work terms.

## Department of Fisheries & Oceans Canada



A contract to conduct field research at the Basin Head Marine Protected Area related to Irish moss monitoring.

## PEI 2014 Fund



A two year partnership designed to implement and develop eco-tourism within our management area. The tourism ventures will begin in 2014.

## Service Canada: Canada Summer Jobs



A wage subsidy is provided to hire a student for an eight week work term.

## Skills PEI: Post Secondary Fund



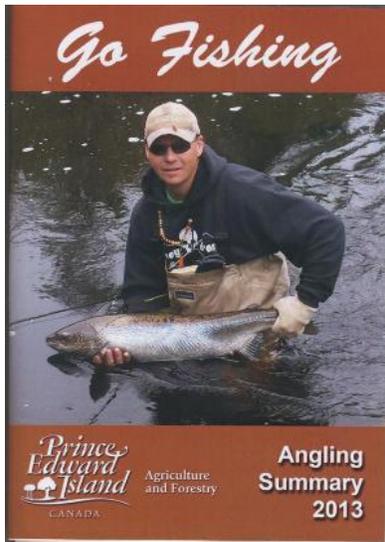
A wage subsidy is provided to hire a post-secondary student for a 14 week work term relating to his/her field or study.

## Wildlife Conservation Fund



Funding was provided for stream enhancement related activities with the goal of enhancing over 100 km of stream to provide habitat fostering spawning, rearing, and sustainability of wildlife species.

We will continue to apply for additional funding as the opportunities arise, from both government and non governments agencies. Again, we would like to thank our current and past partners. Without your support, we would not have such pristine watersheds in our management area as many of our undertakings would not be possible.



## 2013 Angling Regulations

The angling season is well underway, having opened on May 15<sup>th</sup>. Local anglers have reported catches to be similar to the last number of years in most rivers. The largest landings reported to Souris Wildlife was a 4lb Brook trout caught by Mike MacCormack at North Lake and a 4lb Rainbow trout landed by Dawson Grenier at Souris River.

The 2013 Angling Summary is available online and should be consulted by all anglers.

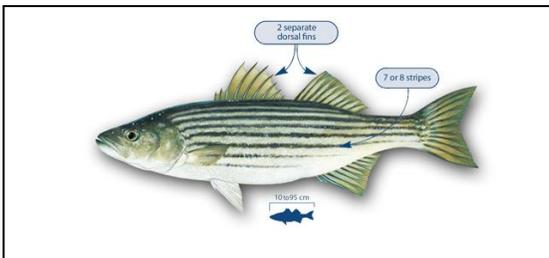
One change noted for 2013 pertains to the extended season for Rainbow trout in Souris River. Page 30 states of the angling guided states: "Catch and release , artificial fly or lure- single barbless hooks only". This should read "Catch and retain..."

with a creel limit of three Rainbow trout per day.

Anglers are not required to purchase an additional license to participate in the extended seasons, however they must register and receive a log book prior to participating.

Anglers will notice garbage cans have been strategically placed at popular fishing preserves. We kindly remind everyone to use the disposal containers provided and to clean up after yourself. We encourage all community members to become involved in recreation angling. If you would like to report a catch or submit a photograph, please contact our office at (902) 687-4115.

## Limited Recreational Striped Bass Fishery Re-opens



The Department of Fisheries & Oceans (DFO) announced the re-opening of a limited recreational Striped Bass Fishery for 2013 in the Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence.

A retention season was opened from May 1-15 with a limit of one Striped Bass per day and maximum possession of one at any given time. Currently, catch and release only of Striped bass is permitted.

There will be an additional retention period open from August 2-11, with the possibility of extending this season. The same retention and possession limits apply. Striped bass will be catch and release only until August 2.

DFO has committed \$100,000 in the next fiscal year for scientific research pertaining to their interactions within ecosystems.

### Save the Date – Lobster Fundraising Dinner

**AUGUST 11, 2013 • EASTERN KINGS SPORTSPLEX • \$20 or \$25 • SIT IN OR TAKE OUT**

**((\$25 ticket includes Souris & Area Wildlife membership for \$5, at half price)**

**To pre-order tickets please contact Jill at (902) 687-4115 or (902) 218-1071**

# Basin Head Marine Protected Area

Under the *Oceans Act*, the Department of Fisheries & Oceans (DFO) has designated several Marine Protected Areas (MPA), which due to their ecological significance, have required special consideration and protection.

In 2005, Basin Head was designated one of eight MPA's in Canada due to a unique strain of Irish moss, *Chondrus crispus*, whose life cycle is limited to this ecosystem.

There are noteworthy differences between the common, open coast form found in shallow waters on PEI and the Basin Head strain of Irish moss:

1. The Basin Head strain is free floating and stays in the lagoon by attaching to the

2. It yields 75% pure carrageen versus 45-50% pure found in the common form.
3. It is larger (800 grams) than the common strain (50 grams)
4. It maintains its red-brown color year round while the common forms undergoes color changes from red to yellow to green throughout the summer.

Over the last few of years, the amount of Irish moss has significantly declined. In the 1980s-1990s, the Irish moss abundance was over 8,000

m<sup>2</sup>. It has gradually declined with a notable crash in the 2000s, to approximately 1.6 m<sup>2</sup> in 2012.

The current hypothesis for this decline is the predatory mechanisms of the invasive European green crab, which have flourished in Basin Head in the last number of years.

Currently, initiatives to aid in the recovery of the Irish moss are under planning and awaiting final approval. DFO plans to implement long lines in an attempt to revive the stock in its natural environment. There is currently stock held at a laboratory in Nova Scotia. Unfortunately, DFO green crab research will not occur in 2013.

## 2013 Monitoring Activities

With the MPA designation, continual research and monitoring initiatives occur to ensure the integrity of the Irish moss is protected. Souris & Area Wildlife has been contracted to conduct field monitoring activities at Basin Head.

Monitoring activities include water quality analysis, nutrient sampling, Ulva (sea lettuce) monitoring, and the Community Aquatic Monitoring Program (CAMP).

Beginning in June, weekly monitoring will occur until November. Nine sites within the Basin Head lagoon, in addition to two fresh water sites, are tested weekly. Water quality parameters measured include temperature, salinity,

dissolved oxygen, turbidity and chlorophyll B. Two samples for nutrient analysis are taken at each site.

Ulva development is monitored weekly through photographic records. Each week, at low tide, panoramic photos are taken at three sites to evaluate the growth throughout the summer. The sites include: Elliotts Lookout, Foul Bay and Chings Bridge.

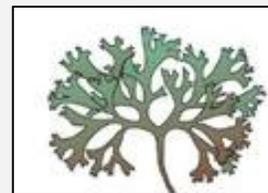
CAMP is a data collection program designed to evaluate the health of an estuary based on presence or absence, and type and number of a particular fish species.

Sampling is done using a beach seining net over a 225 meter area to collect

marine species at six locations within the estuary. The marine species are then identified, counted, recorded and released alive. Data is compiled in a DFO database and can be accessed on their website.

Water quality is also tested to monitor temperature, dissolved oxygen, salinity in addition to the aquatic vegetation present and bottom substrate.

CAMP sampling was conducted on May 31 and June 18, thus far. Common species found at Basin Head include green crab, sand shrimp, sticklebacks, silversides and flounder. Sand shrimp have been identified as an indicator of a healthy estuary. Sand shrimp appear to be in very high abundance at Basin Head.



Typical morphology of Irish moss on Prince Edward Island



Typical morphology of Irish moss found at Basin Head



Irish moss (*Chondrus crispus*) in Basin Head in 2008 (DFO)

Photo by Bob Semple





## PEI 2014 Fund

PEI 2014 Inc. is a non-profit organization responsible for planning and executing the celebration of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1864 Charlottetown Conference. The aim of this project is to encourage community participation and awareness of the celebration to further solidify PEI as the "Birthplace of Confederation" while enhancing economic development and increasing tourism.

Funding applications were made available in 2012 for projects fitting the outlined criteria. Souris & Area Wildlife was approved for a project to create eco-tourism in the north Eastern Kings County area.

The entire amount requested to implement this project was not approved. Therefore, we will have to make necessary

amendments to the project to coincide with our budget.

Originally we planned to develop three eco tours encompassing kayaking, cycling and a shoreline walk. Our board unanimously agreed to make this venture worthwhile we would focus on two; cycling and shoreline walk. The kayak venture was deemed the highest risk and most costly. We would like to establish two sound tours for the first year and eventually seek to incorporate the kayaking aspect.

The following is a brief outline of the two eco-tours which will open in spring 2014:

### 1. Basin Head MPA Tour

An interactive video presentation about the Basin Head Marine Protected

Area will be screened for participants before embarking on a guided walking tour along the sandy coastline of Basin Head. The guide will relay information relating to the history of Basin Head, inshore fishing, local flora and fauna and marine ecosystems.

### 2. Cycling on the Confederation Trail

New Harmony is one of five railroad junctions that existed on PEI. Participants will cycle along the Confederation Trail while learning the history of the railroad and confederation and its relationship with agriculture and forestry. Other potential highlights could include the Big Elm in the Glen, Brook trout nursery and Fountain Head.

Stay tuned for more details!



Ulva mats in an estuary

## Estuaries on Prince Edward Island

Being an island, our coastlines are dotted with estuaries. These productive areas are where oceans and rivers meet, therefore where salt and fresh water mix. These areas provide productive grounds for aquaculture, grasses to support nursing areas for young marine species and feeding and foraging grounds.

With the soil geology on PEI, sedimentation and nutrient loading are prominent issues. The infilling of navigable harbors and smothering of shellfish beds pose serious problems in estuaries. This problem is more prevalent on the north shore than the south shore, as the north shore is better protected behind sand dune formations so they do not flush as well and only

experiences half the tidal amplitude as south shore estuaries.

As upland activities continually deposit sediment, we are experience nutrient loading into our estuaries. Nitrate input, in particular, is a growing concern on PEI. This promotes the growth of Sea lettuce, or Ulva. This process is called eutrophication.

Eutrophication is a natural environmental response to the influx of substances, such as nitrates and phosphates. With excessive growth, Ulva can die en masse, decompose and in doing so use up all the available oxygen in the water. This leads to a state of anoxia, or absence of oxygen, as the microbial decomposers use all the oxygen.

This alters the composition of the estuarine community as most living things either die or move away. Eel grass, which was once a flourishing plant, is perhaps most adversely affected. Since Ulva floats it can shade out the grass, leading to a decline in this critical habitat.

The Department of Environment, Labour & Justice considers anoxia if two of three conditions are satisfied: milky white or green discoloration of the water, sulfur or "rotten" smell, and/or near zero dissolved oxygen readings

Twelve reported anoxic events have occurred in our management area since 2002 in Basin Head, Little Harbour, Souris River and Black Pond.

## Souris Consolidated School Beach & River Clean Up

Both sides of the Souris causeway, the river and the beach were littered with garbage from human acts and natural spring wash ups.

Souris Consolidated School teacher Graham Townshend kindly volunteered his Grade 6 students to assist with cleaning this area.

On June 5<sup>th</sup>, the students

spent the afternoon filling bags and piling them along the causeway. Town of Souris staff picked up the bags and properly disposed of the waste.

Common items collected included coffee cups, tires, food containers, and a net.

We would like to thank the students for their efforts as they were a pleasure to

worth with. As well, thank you to the local RCMP detachment for placing a car on the causeway to slow passing motorists.

This was a positive learning experience for the students but we encourage all community members to actively practice proper waste disposal measures and show due care for the environment.



## Ecole La Belle Cloche Field Trip

Souris & Area Wildlife hosted an afternoon field trip with students at Ecole La Belle Cloche on June 20<sup>th</sup>.

We began the afternoon demonstrating how to properly plant a tree followed by the students planting 130 various softwood and hardwood tree species in a clearing next to the school.

Next, Fred Cheverie led the students on a trail walk to illustrate the different types of trees found in nature. Many former students can remember embarking on similar adventures when Fred was a teacher at Souris Consolidated School.

Finally, we finished the afternoon with a beach seine at Fortune River, led

by Jill MacPhee, exploring the diverse marine community. We were able to catch sand shrimp, crabs, sticklebacks, flounders, silversides, and sculpins in our net.

The students showed a keen interest in the environment and were a very well mannered, pleasant group to work



*"Teaching children about the natural world should be seen as one of the most important events in their lives"*

- Thomas Berry  
(The Dream of Earth)

**Souris & Area Branch of the PEI Wildlife Federation**

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**Facebook**  
Souris & Area Branch of the PEI Wildlife Federation

**About Us**

The Souris & Area Branch of the PEI Wildlife Federation is a non-profit environmental dedicated to the conservation, protection, and enhancement of watersheds organization in north eastern Kings County. Our management area accounts for approximately 62, 000 hectares including 24 individual watersheds.

The goals of our organization include:

1. The protection and enhancement of fish and wildlife and their habitat
2. Watershed planning, protection and restoration
3. Education of the general public on environmental issues
4. The promotion of outdoor recreational activities
5. Improved communication with our stakeholders to create a more informed community at large.



## President's Comments

*Brian MacDonald*

The eagle perches along Souris River are finally up. Year after year, we re-erect the perches as ice scouring, tides and wind knock them over. This year, we think we have found a permanent fix to ensure these remain standing year round.

Each perch has four foot mussel anchors manually screwed into the ground and a ½ inch steel plate welded on top to enable the perch to be installed similarly to a flag pole. Foster Campbell donated two aluminum light poles, approximately 20 feet long, which were doweled with 12 feet of spruce and fitted with wooden perches 4.5 feet long. Each perch is enclosed by a four foot wooden juniper gabion fastened with spikes and rebar on two sides. The gabions will be filled with sandstone to ensure they remain sturdy.

We have seen eagles frequent the perches as early as the afternoon they were erected. It is a great opportunity to see these magnificent birds in nature.

## Coordinator's Comments

*Fred Cheverie*

We would like to welcome Brian MacDonald as our newly elected President. Brian grew up in a military family so has lived in many parts of Canada but always visited PEI in the summers. In the 1980's, he and his wife Debbie moved to St. Catherine's to his grandfather's homestead where they raised their family.

Brian has a real passion for the environment. As an avid kayaker and biker he has peddled and paddled through areas where many people do not venture. This passion has fueled him to become an advocate for environmental education within the community. He truly believes in stronger enforcement laws against dumping garbage and increased education on the values of recycling. Brian is very interested in the Islands future and believes sustainability lies within sustaining our air and water quality and preserving our fertile soils.

### Interested in making a donation to the Souris & Area Branch of the PEI Wildlife Federation?

Simply fill out this form and mail it to us.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

Province: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed:  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Cheques may be made payable to the PEI Wildlife Federation in order to issue an official charitable tax receipt.*

### Interested in becoming a member of the Souris & Area Branch of the PEI Wildlife Federation?

2013 Memberships fees are only \$10.

There are currently 200 active members in our branch who represent the angling, hunting, naturalist, trapping, and conservationist sectors within our community.

There are many benefits to becoming a member:

- Participate free of charge in Souris & Area Wildlife activities
- Receive colored electronic copies of our newsletter "Souris & Area Watershed News"
- Voting privileges on resolutions at our annual meeting
- Educational and hands on volunteer opportunities in various capacities
- Enhance and preserve the environment through community support

To purchase your membership:

- Call us at (902) 687-4115
- Email us at [sourisareawildlife@gmail.com](mailto:sourisareawildlife@gmail.com)
- Mail your membership fee

Membership cards are sent via mail