



ST. LAWRENCE ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK OF CANADA

The Pitch Pine Post

MALLORYTOWN
LANDING, ONTARIO

SPRING 2011



COME CELEBRATE!

In 2011, Parks Canada is celebrating its 100th birthday and its establishment in 1911 as the world's first national parks service.

IN THIS ISSUE



Paddling.....7



Emerald Ash Borer.....9

Akwesasne's Voice.....6

Facilities & Activities.....12

Facility update.....11

Hours of Operation.....12

Looking Back.....2

Map.....12

Prescribed Fire.....4

Photo Contest.....10

Species at Risk.....5

Xplorers Program.....3

St. Lawrence Islands National Park

2 County Rd. 5, R.R.#3
Mallorytown, ON
K0E 1R0

(613) 923-5261

www.pc.gc.ca/sli

Email: ont-sli@pc.gc.ca

Printed in Canada © Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, represented by the Chief Executive Officer of Parks Canada, 2011.

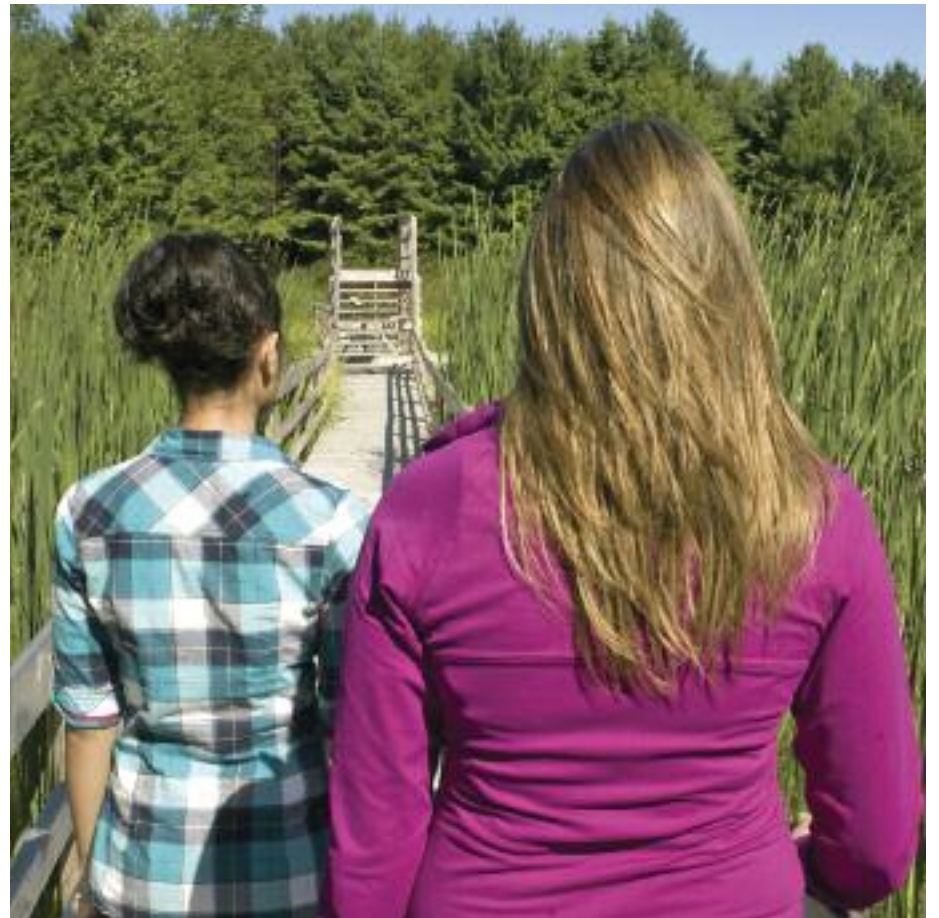
Boardwalk crew wins CEO award

The general works crew at St. Lawrence Islands National Park has built a reputation for ingenuity.

Last summer, nine members of the park staff were honoured with a Parks Canada Agency CEO Award of Excellence. This award celebrates their design and construction of a unique boardwalk spanning Mud Creek on the Jones Creek trail system. Visitors can now move between the upper and lower sections of the trail by crossing an impressive 650-foot cedar platform that takes them through a serene wetland scene. Walking on the low-lying boardwalk, a visitor has the perspective of being at one with the creek and marsh. The bridge at the centre of the boardwalk, with its expansive 360-degree aerial views, completes this experience.

The achievement originated in what seemed at first like an insurmountable challenge, both technical and financial. The boardwalk was to span a wide stretch of creek and wetland while allowing clearance for small watercraft due to the creek's status as a navigable waterway. The initial design that included fixed platforms on piers came with a price tag of \$600,000.

That budget was simply out of the question, so the works crew started making plans of their



Hikers on the floating boardwalk.

Photo: Parks Canada

own. What they came up with was a floating boardwalk that cost a fraction of the original estimate. When all was said and done, the boardwalk cost approximately \$80,000 to build.

"Making a floating archway bridge that was balanced was a big challenge," says Kent Dowsley, asset support technician for the park. Dowsley explains

that large sections of the boardwalk were assembled on land, and some of the trickiest work involved floating the 60-foot sections of boardwalk up the shallow creek.

Dan Gaylord, who helped assemble the structure, agrees that the most difficult aspect of

See BOARDWALK on page 2

New life on Georgina surprises park researchers

In the post-fire environment on the west end of Georgina Island Josh Van Wieren, park ecologist, has found an impressive amount of new life. Over 50 percent of the plant species he's found after the prescribed fire in 2009 are species that haven't been found on Georgina Island for decades, like pilewort and bristly sarsaparilla. So how did they get there?



Photos: Parks Canada

New life springs back just one year after the prescribed fire on Georgina.

"Seeds can remain dormant for 40 to 50 years in the seed bed," says Van Wieren. "After the fire opened up the canopy, these fire- and disturbance-dependent species took advantage of the right conditions."

Many plant species including

pitch pine, red oak, and deerberry have co-evolved with the presence of natural forest fires. Certain characteristics like protected buds

See GEORGINA on page 4

The Superintendent Says...

By Jeff Leggo, St. Lawrence Islands National Park Superintendent



Hello and welcome to St. Lawrence Islands National Park for the 2011 season. Building on the successes of 2010, we are looking forward to another year of enjoyable activities. This is a very special year for the park as it is the 100th anniversary of the establishment of Parks Canada, the world's first system of national parks. For 100 years, Parks Canada has been protecting the country's natural and cultural heritage for you to enjoy and experience. Share your memories of the park by filling out one of the birthday cards that will be circulating in the park. This year there will be opportunities for celebration throughout the summer.

While visiting the park you can be a part of these celebrations on July 1 for Canada Day, when we will bring the party out to the islands, or June 25 for Aboriginal Day. The centre page of this issue has the summer season's events schedule and you are welcome to have a look and plan to attend. In addition to the season's special events, the trail system at Jones Creek provides a wonderful opportunity to explore the park at your own pace and enjoy a day in the outdoors.

Park staff, including managers, will be available to provide information and answer any questions you may have during your visit. We are always interested in your comments and input. I hope you have a safe and enjoyable experience and return home refreshed after your time in St. Lawrence Islands National Park.

Regional cooperation in new management plan

St. Lawrence Islands National Park has a new management plan that takes a look outward, beyond the bounds of the park, to build a sustainable model of operations for the future.

The 2010 Management Plan provides direction to managers in areas of visitor experience, heritage protection and public outreach. The park consists of fragmented land holdings spread across a wide geographic area and located on both the mainland and on islands. Spread out as it is across the landscape, the park needs to work closely with residents and stakeholders in the region, and this plan puts an emphasis on external partnering.

"When we work with like-minded agencies on common issues the number of possible solutions goes up and the costs go down," says park superintendent Jeff Leggo.

Key strategies include working with municipalities, stakeholders and regional residents to foster memorable visitor experiences, protection and stewardship on a broader landscape level. The actions that stem from this approach involve cooperation with other organizations on species at risk recovery strategies, contributing to land-use planning processes, working with local residents to foster environmental stewardship, and joining with local operators to package, promote and participate in tourism activities on a regional scale. This collaborative approach also takes the form of data sharing with sim-

ilar organizations and developing a stronger link with the Mohawks of Akwesasne to learn about that community's traditional knowledge and stories of the area.

For the park, looking outward also means attracting new visitors and getting a better picture of their needs and interests. With its location along the Hwy. 401 corridor, the park is ideally situated to tap into visitation from urban centres such as Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal. On a national scale, Parks Canada is investing in research with regard to current and potential visitors, and this drive to better understand Canadian audiences is reflected in the park's management plan.

"Understanding audiences is the very first step in reaching out to Canadians who haven't traditionally visited national parks," says product development officer Kim Robinson. "The agency's investment in audience research has really paid off. We now have a wealth of information that will help us to tailor our programming to attract new visitors and to make the experience more appealing to people who've been coming to the park for years."

With audiences new and old in mind, the plan also outlines the management approach that guides the economically and environmentally sustainable development and maintenance of park facilities and services.

To learn more, read the St. Lawrence Islands National Park Management Plan 2010 online at <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/on/lawren/plan.aspx>

Award-winning construction

Continued from page 1

the work was getting the pieces there without damaging the surrounding wetland. He says fitting the sections together using a hand-operated winch was no problem, "They're really just building blocks," but he adds that when you build something in the shop and then assemble it later on site, it's always a relief to see the pieces come together properly.

Gaylord was one of two team representatives on hand to receive the CEO Award in a ceremony at the Chateau Laurier in Ottawa last June. He was joined by his co-worker Kevin Harris.

The awards are given out annually to a select number of Parks Canada employees in recognition of outstanding contributions in the workplace. The St. Lawrence Islands crew was recognized in the category of improving operations and services.

In presenting the award, Parks Canada CEO Alan Latourelle said that the award recognized their "extraordinary contribution to services and operations improvements, shown in the Mud Creek Floating Boardwalk / Bridge, which was manufactured in a remarkably swift and proficient manner."

Harris and Gaylord share the honour with Kent Dowsley, Tom Lusk, Mike Ronan, Lindsay Shannon, Peter Sine, Tim Jowett and Scott Buell.



Photo: Parks Canada

Dan Gaylord puts the finishing touches on a smaller floating boardwalk on the Jones Creek Trail.

"We had an excellent team," says Gaylord. "Everyone involved in building it was also involved in designing it."

He also notes that he and his co-workers have put to use what they learned on the boardwalk project on a smaller scale. A new boardwalk that will be completed this spring along a beaver pond on another section of the Jones Creek trails incorporates similar design elements.

This is the fifth time St. Lawrence Islands National Park employees have been recognized with a CEO award. Past recipients include: Jeff Leggo in 2002 for partnering and engagement, Mike Ronan in 2003 for rescuing boaters on the river, Chris Bellemore in 2007 for Species at Risk outreach and communications, and Harry Szeto in 2009 for the Island Stewards program.

Looking Back...

Young anglers at the Landing

On a blustery day last February there were a few hardy souls ice fishing at Mallorytown Landing during the Front of Yonge Winter Festival. Among them were some of the under-10 set. Clockwise from top left, Ava and Angus Sinclair tried their luck that day, continuing a long-standing tradition of fishing on the point. In the early 80's, another set of siblings, Travis and Ryan Birtch, set up their fishing lines at the landing.

Photos: Parks Canada



Photos: Sheila Birtch

Adventure in store for Xplorer kids

Calling all kids with a sense of adventure! This summer you can become an official Parks Canada Xplorer as St. Lawrence Islands National Park joins 40 Parks Canada sites in offering a new, nation-wide children's program.

In July, as part of its 100th anniversary celebrations, Parks Canada is launching this national program of exploration and activities specifically designed for children aged 6 to 11 and their families.

The focus of the Xplorers program is on having fun while discovering Canada's natural and cultural heritage. It will encourage discovery through entertaining and recreational activities in parks, historic sites and marine conservation areas. Across the country and throughout 2011, Canada's treasured historic and natural places will be host sites to special programs like Xplorers to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Dominion Parks Branch. This was the world's first national parks service, which came into being on May 19, 1911 and is now known as Parks Canada.

Xplorers activities will vary from place to place according to the unique qualities of the park, site or marine conservation area. Specific activities at St. Lawrence Islands National Park will include a hunt for symbols of the Mohawk Thanksgiving Address on stones at the visitor centre, a stopwatch race to record plant and animal species in the park, an introduction to the secrets of snake handling, a sensory exploration of

park environments, and a study of the landscape and park visitors 100 years ago.

When they arrive at the park, children will receive an Xplorers activity workbook to help guide their visit. Once they have completed a number of these experiences, they will receive a certificate and souvenir as tokens of their success. The program will be included in regular entry fees.

The Xplorers program offers a lot of choice, with a range of activities including exploring exhibits, walking trails, taking part in unique challenges and interacting with staff, and children are free to choose those activities that most appeal to them. Activities have been designed so that even during a short visit to the park, children can earn their Xplorers certificate and receive a souvenir of their experience.

Souvenirs will be unique to each site in order to encourage participants to collect them all. By summer 2012, the Xplorers program will be offered throughout the Parks Canada network.

Product development officer Kim Robinson says the program will appeal to both children who are very familiar with the park and those who are visiting for the first time.

"The activities prompt kids to look at the park through many different 'lenses' and see it in new ways," says Robinson. "It also encourages a lot of personal reflection, awareness of what their own senses are taking in, and awareness of what's happening in that particular moment."

"I think kids are much better at doing this than adults already, stepping away from other distractions and getting immersed in the scene at hand," says Robinson. "This program just helps them along with that."



An eastern screech-owl and a great horned owl will be on display at the visitor centre this summer. Photos: Royal Ontario Museum

Forest creatures inhabit visitor centre at Mallorytown Landing

A stroll through the park visitor centre this summer will feel more like a walk through a northern forest, with exhibits from the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) and Montreal's Biosphere Environment Museum transforming the space with scenes of the boreal landscape and examples of some of that region's most interesting inhabitants.

The visitor centre will be home to a ROM travelling exhibit on northern owls that features eleven skilfully mounted owl specimens shown in settings suggestive of their natural habitats. Each display focuses on fascinating and less well-known aspects of owl behaviour and biology. In the exhibit space, visitors can have the rare experience of coming face-to-face with birds such as the tiny northern saw-whet owl.

The northern owl exhibit will be right at home with a backdrop of boreal forest scenes from the Montreal Biosphere's photo collection. This exhibit provides new and unusual perspectives on the Canadian boreal forest and takes visitors on a photographic journey high above the forest to learn about its features and riches. Accompanying text panels reveal the story behind the production of the exhibit.

Next door to the travelling exhibit space, the activity area features live animal displays and interactive exhibits. Having seen the owls, visitors can see how they measure up to the wing spans of other local birds of prey in a new display. Visitors will also want to pay a visit to Willow the black rat snake, a favourite from last year. Park interpreters are on hand to answer your questions and show you what's new this year in the centre.

Visitors warm up to winter events

Winter is a magical time in the park, from the hush of a forest blanketed in snow to the stark beauty of ice formations on the river. During the Front of Yonge Winter Festival in February, local residents got a chance to savour some of these winter pleasures in snowshoe hikes and a fishing derby at Mallorytown Landing.

Park interpreter Marianne Kelly led the hikes on Feb. 19. For her, a winter hike is a special opportunity to track animal life in the forest.

"Amidst the calm of the woods, the drama of winter survival plays out in the tracks that animals leave behind. You don't get this insight into the lives of animals at any other time of year," says Kelly. "On one of our hikes there was this perfect set of red squirrel tracks followed by a set of marten tracks, which is one of the red squirrel's primary predators. You could see them disappear into the woods and

just imagine how it might have played out."

Hike participants were making tracks of their own, some of them trying out snowshoes for the first time. Monica Johnson of Prescott, Ontario attended with a friend, and she said they enjoyed it so much that they've decided to take up snowshoeing as a winter hobby.

"We've already gone shopping for snowshoes," she said when contacted a few days after the hike. "We went to look at them the next day."

Johnson said the hikes were a perfect activity for the Family Day weekend, and she welcomed the opportunity to learn a bit about the park while taking in some fresh air on the trails.

Out on the river at the fishing derby, the day was cold and blustery, but Morris Slate was on the ice at 8 a.m. sharp and didn't give up his post until noon. Even losing his line to a large pike didn't stop him.

"The drag wasn't working," said

Slate. "By the time I got to the rod, the fish was on it, but the line broke. At least there are some pike out there."

Still, Slate loves the sport and isn't easily deterred.

"I've been fishing since before I knew how to swim," he said.

The fishing derby and hikes at Mallorytown Landing were part of a larger community effort to bring some fun to the coldest days of winter. It was the second year of the Front of Yonge Winter Festival, and festival organizer Amy Neuman says it has grown, with more than 15 local organizations involved in mounting the event and approximately 500 participants this year.

The park's snowshoe hikes, which have been offered for the last few winters, have grown in popularity and fill up quickly. If you're thinking of trying out snowshoeing with us next winter, reserve your spot early so that you won't be disappointed.



Photo: Andersen Ross/Blend Images/Getty Images



Photo: Parks Canada

A freshly cut white pine was among the trees culled at Mallorytown to reduce competition for new pitch pine seedlings at the site of the future prescribed fire.

Mallorytown Landing open-air lab for forest regeneration

With two successful prescribed fires in the last two years, St. Lawrence Islands National Park will be testing an alternative method of pitch pine regeneration at Mallorytown Landing in 2011. The result will be a code of good practice that can be used by both the park and Thousand Islands area residents who wish to be pitch pine stewards on their own property.

Prescribed fires have been used to clear the layer of leaf litter from the forest floor, reduce competition from other plants and allow fire adapted seedlings to root. However, there is more than one way to skin the proverbial cat.

Resource conservation staff will conduct different ecological treatments in a pitch pine stand on the Six Nations Trail north of Old River Road. The plot on the east side of the trail will be "scarified" and the adjacent plot on the west side of the trail will have a small prescribed fire.

"For such a scientific name, scarification is a fairly simple process. It's essentially raking the forest floor," says Katie Ellsworth, public safety specialist. "Scarification may achieve a

similar result to a fire on small sites, by removing the duff layer and allowing seedlings to root in mineral soil."

Seeds will be allowed to fall naturally from adult trees and root themselves on the west side of the trail, the site of the prescribed fire. On the east side of the trail, seedlings that have been carefully raised by local pitch pine advocate Doug Bickerton will be planted in the scarified soil.

Hikers of the Six Nations Trail will also notice that some trees have been cut down and some have been "girdled" or had a ring of bark stripped from their trunks. This is to reduce shade that would inhibit seedling growth. Girdled trees will eventually die but since they will remain standing, they will provide crucial habitat for insects, birds, small mammals, and perhaps even nest sites for osprey or eagles.

Both plots will be monitored for seedling success. When the data is in, the result will be a new generation of pitch pine as well as a set of best practices for both the park and local landowners who want to give pitch pine a helping hand without the use of fire.

Because of the mainland loca-

Osprey get bird's-eye view of prescribed fire

When St. Lawrence Islands National Park's fire crew conducted a prescribed fire on Gordon Island in the spring of 2010, they had a couple of unexpected observers. Two nesting osprey kept a close eye on the fire from their nest that lay cradled in one of the standing dead oak trees on the island.

Mary Beth Lynch, resource conservation technician, observed from a boat stationed off the island, "The osprey left the nest



Photo: Parks Canada

The watchful osprey.

and hovered over the island during the fire, probably disturbed by the smoke and activity."

While the pair experienced stress, fire specialists ensured their safety by clearing any nearby fire fuel and soaking a ring around the tree. The birds watched cautiously, going so far as to protest the disturbance, but returned loyally to their home when the fire was out.

Despite the protestations of the osprey, the fire was good news for other residents of the island. The dead red oaks of Gordon Island have been victims of short horned oakworm, ice storms, and drought in the last 13 years. Additionally, the abundance of shrubs like raspberry and blackberry has shaded out any new seedlings.

A low intensity fire that covered some 80 per cent or seven hectares of the island cleared

Georgina vegetation springs to life

Continued from page 1

and thick bark improve their ability to survive a forest fire and bounce back after the fact. However, the suppression of natural forest fires in the Thousand Islands area has resulted in declines in these fire adapted plant species.

Fire benefits other plant species as well. White pine, and white oak are shade intolerant; they need a lot of sunlight to grow. When fires kill adult trees, the forest canopy opens and allows new trees to grow. The dead tree may remain standing and provide food for insects and the woodpeckers that feed on them. Standing dead trees also provide crucial nest sites for osprey and bald eagles. A fallen tree becomes food and homes for insects, worms, fungi, salamanders, and new seedlings that grow in the rich soil it leaves behind.

tion, additional safety precautions are being taken to protect the public. The trained fire team at St. Lawrence Islands National Park will be working in cooperation with the Front of Yonge volunteer fire department, the Ontario Provincial Police and fire experts from Pukaskwa National Park to ensure that the fire goes as planned and is extinguished outside the bounds of the designated location. Fire departments in the towns of Brockville, Gananoque, and Alexandria Bay, and in the townships of Elizabethtown-Kitley and Leeds and the Thousand Islands will be alerted and may also participate in ensuring public safety during the fire. The trails will be closed on the date of the fire until it is fully extinguished. Personnel will be stationed at all trail heads and the trails will be swept to ensure the

Van Wieren has been monitoring every tree, shrub, and herb along two transects at the site of the fire for the last three years and reports a healthy new generation of pitch pine.

"I've seen about 15 new pitch pine seedlings taking root," Van Wieren notes, "but there could be more than twice that."

Van Wieren says that we can also keep our eyes open for a flourishing bird community at the site. Trees killed by the fire will be taken over by burrowing insects, which will then draw insectivorous bird species like woodpeckers to the island.

"This is an important pitch pine stand for Canada," says Van Wieren. "If we continue to get more regeneration over the next few years we could have the first mixed aged stand we've had in the park for decades and eventually, a fully regenerated stand."

area remains clear of visitors.

A boundary will be cleared of combustible material and soaked with water to prevent spread outside the prescribed area. In addition, a fire crew will be assigned to extinguish any sparks or spot fires that jump the boundary.

Like all prescribed fires at St. Lawrence Islands National Park, a very specific prescription of wind speed and direction, pressure, and humidity must be met before a fire is lit in order to minimize lingering smoke and unsafe fire conditions.

To learn more, attend the park's Prescribed Fire Open House this June.

St. Lawrence Islands National Park Prescribed Fire Open House

Thursday, June 23, 7 p.m.
Rockport Recreation Centre



Photo: Parks Canada

Deerberry puts down roots with pitch pine

The post-fire environment on Georgina Island has not only benefited pitch pine seedlings, it's giving the threatened plant deerberry a boost too.

Like some other plants in the heath family, a more common one being blueberry, the deerberry plant (*Vaccinium stamineum*) thrives when competing plants are cleared out of the way. Park resource conservation staff have capitalized on the conditions created by prescribed fires and planted deerberry on Georgina following the fire in 2009.

"They've done well," says ecosystem scientist Josh Van Wieren. "The majority of the plants have survived and now have a head start on any competing blueberries."

As a partner in a national deerberry recovery strategy, the park is working to protect the few stands of the plant left in Ontario. In the whole of the province there are three populations found in the Thousand Islands and one in the Niagara region. Deerberry has been designated threatened by both the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) and by the Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario (COSSARO).

The new plantings in the park will help to increase that population.

Dale Kristensen is the manager of the Queen's University Phytotron, a greenhouse facility that supports plant research. Kristensen propagated the deerberry plants using seed collected by park staff from Grenadier Island. He had been testing different methods of propagation since 2000 and had discovered that sowing freshly collected seed worked best. Germination was only half the battle however. Kristensen had to contend with algae and other agents causing survivorship problems in the plants while finding ways to amend soils to provide the proper mix of nutrients and a suitable level of acidity. A crop of successful seedlings produced in the second year of trials was planted on Hill Island and promptly eaten by deer. Many of the plants in Kristensen's early tests failed to thrive, but with each successive planting he learned more about the plant's requirements. In 2009, he was able to provide more than 300 deerberry seedlings for transplantation on Georgina Island.

Ongoing research related to the deerberry recovery strategy has the potential to sort out some of these difficulties, and there are other knowledge gaps regarding habitat requirements and genetic viability of deerberry that the recovery strategy aims to fill.

"Deerberry is still a bit of a mystery. We don't entirely under-

stand why they're not reproducing. For example, the pollination process is not well understood with this plant," says VanWieren.

The transplanted deerberry will also provide an opportunity to investigate the role of fire in habitat creation and maintenance. Deerberry has also been planted on Camelot Island where there may be a prescribed fire in the future, giving researchers an opportunity to test out the plants' survival and regeneration after a fire.



Photo: Mike Seabert
Erin Thompson, a researcher for the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve Network, poses with a stinkpot turtle, one of the rare wetland species found in 2010.

SAR sleuths survey wetlands

In the 1980s, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR) started to evaluate wetlands across the province for significance and presence of rare species. In 2010, two hardworking species at risk surveyors took up the torch anew. Erin Thompson and Mike Seabert met with great success and due to the presence of some of Ontario's rare species, 18 wetlands were designated provincially significant by the OMNR.

Thompson and Seabert strapped on their hip waders, hopped in their canoe and surveyed wetlands and shorelines in the Thousand Islands Area and inland lakes. They were working for the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve Network (FABRN) on the Species at Risk and Evaluated Wetlands Project.

"It was an incredible experience for two new graduates," said

Thompson. "Since being quiet and stealthy was part of finding some of the species at risk we got to see other wetland species going about their daily business to a greater degree than you would by boat or even canoe. We literally got to see these wetlands from a whole new perspective."

They had their eyes peeled for rare and at risk species like pugnose shiners, grass pickerels, bridle shiners, Blanding's turtles, and stinkpot turtles.

"Stinkpots like to bask out of sight so we would often find them at the water surface sandwiched between the lily pads and the weeds," noted Thompson.

Fish were surveyed using a method called "electrofishing" wherein a boat equipped with anodes sends a mild shock into the surrounding water. Stunned fish float to the water's surface and are netted, transferred to a

reservoir in the boat and identified. They are then returned safely to their habitat. The presence of rare American eels at two of the sites was a hopeful sign, as they've been in decline since the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway.

They also recorded incidents of other species at risk like snapping turtles, map turtles, black terns, least bitterns, and rare plants.

"These wetlands warrant a lot of consideration for protection and stewardship but it's a good news story," says park ecologist Josh Van Wieren. "We know that we have all these wetlands that are full of rare species that are disappearing from other parts of the province. Our natural heritage system still has enough integrity to support those species because we are less developed."

Humans among rare visitors to isolated island

On a map of Lake Ontario, Main Duck Island is a tiny speck in the waters between Prince Edward Point, Ontario and Stony Point, New York. Remote and windswept, Main Duck is one of the park's most challenging sites for monitoring wildlife, but as a group of researchers learned last year, it's well worth the trip.

Last summer was the first season park ecologists started gathering data on the island's plants and animals -- setting up a system of surveying that will be repeated with consistency in years to come and provide data that will allow the park to track trends over the long term.

Park ecologist Josh Van Wieren was eager to get out to the island. He notes that there have been some wildlife surveys conducted by other organizations on Main Duck in the past and those have produced some "rare and unusual finds -- Northern bobwhites, Henslow's sparrows, species that we would never find here on the mainland. It's a very different ecosystem out there in the lake."

What the researchers found was a surprising variety of birds, reptiles, amphibians and plants.

The crew of three recorded birds at specific locations that will be revisited by field researchers in successive seasons, to get a better idea of "what is breeding there as opposed to just popping in," says Van Wieren.

They set up microphones to track birdcalls and plotted out areas to monitor plant life in meadows throughout the island. Researchers identified the plant species in the meadow plots and estimated the relative quantities of each. These plots will be revisited and monitored in future trips to the island. In the island's forest communities, the crew mapped out and assessed three Ecological Land Classification (ELC) plots. While the researchers saw plenty of wildlife, there wasn't another human in sight.

"We were dropped off and we didn't see another person for three days," says Van Wieren.

When their work was done, the remoteness of the island and some choppy water had them camping out for an extra night.

"When we realized we weren't getting picked up, we started thinking about all the field work we could get done if we had an extra week," says resource conservation technician Mary Beth Lynch. "Despite the

rain and heavy winds that persisted throughout our stay, each day on the island was full of discovery and beauty."



Photo: Nick Scobel

Akwesasne's Voice

St. Lawrence Islands National Park is working in close cooperation with the Mohawks of Akwesasne, a community of approximately 15,000 that straddles the boundary between Canada and the United States at Cornwall. The park recognizes the strong ties that the community of Akwesasne has to the natural world and to the Thousand Islands as traditional Haudenosaunee territory. The park works with the community to incorporate its voice in interpretive programming, but some of the best opportunities to learn about the culture are within the community itself. It is a testament to the rich and vibrant culture of Akwesasne that the community is home to not one but two institutions dedicated to cultural traditions: the Native North American Travelling College and the Akwesasne Cultural Center.



A painting by John Thomas from the Akwesasne Cultural Center's lacrosse exhibit.

Photo: Akwesasne Cultural Center

All welcome to experience Mohawk culture

The Native North American Travelling College has the mandate to provide cultural and traditional education on the Mohawk peoples and has been fulfilling this since its inception in 1969 by the late Dr. Ernest Benedict. The Travelling College is based on Cornwall Island in the Mohawk Community of Akwesasne and includes a museum, library, teaching facilities for classrooms and workshops, a gift shop and a new amphitheatre for outdoor concerts and events.

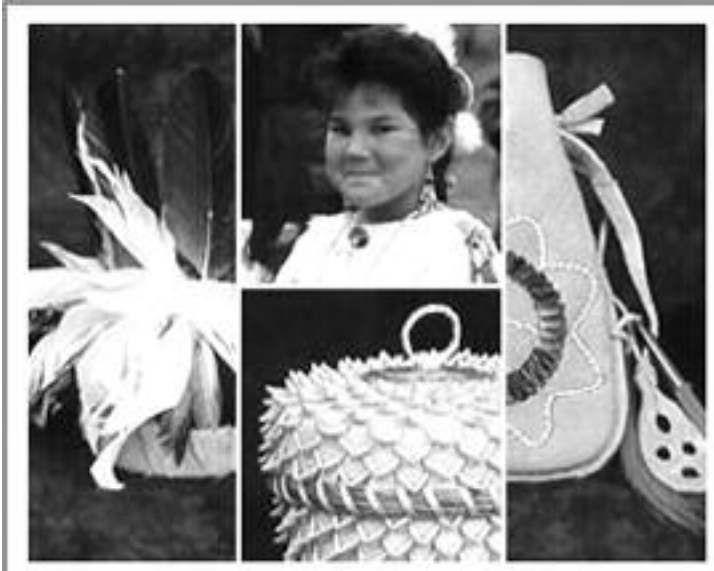
Each year the college hosts a Strawberry Festival in June that includes musical entertainment, storytelling, drumming and treats for young and old. In mid-August the college hosts its annual Friendship Days where it proudly provides opportunities for cultural artisans to display their products and to

offer interested people the opportunity to try their hand at basket making, beading, traditional clothing and other forms of traditional arts and crafts. Both events are alcohol and drug free and guests have the opportunity to sample a variety of food including traditional Mohawk cuisine along with participating in games like horseshoe toss, tug of war and beach volleyball.

The current Executive Director, Russell Roundpoint emphasizes that "everyone is welcomed at the college" and is mindful of Dr. Benedict's words that "we need to share what we have learned with one another; we need to help our children to grow up with new knowledge and old wisdom."

Cultural teachings and history form integral parts of a person's development and the Travelling College stands ready to provide cultural education either at the centre or by delivery at other locations via the Travel Troupe who deliver sessions fea-

turing authentic interpretations of Haudenosaunee history. The Travel Troupe travels year-round to schools, groups and organizations throughout Canada and the United States providing cultural education. Given that the theme of cultural diversity is embraced throughout North America the words of Asareko:wa at the signing of the



Photos: Akwesasne Cultural Center

Traditional arts and contemporary culture are featured at the Akwesasne Cultural Center.

Treaty of Lancaster take on greater importance when he stated "but you who are wise must know that different Nations have different conceptions of things, and you will therefore not take it amiss if our ideas of this kind of education happen not to be the same as yours." Indeed the burden of knowledge is not to possess it, but rather to pass it along for the generations to come. That is the mandate of the Native North American Travelling College.

The Akwesasne Cultural Center in Hogansburg, New York houses a library and the Akwesasne Museum. The museum's collection includes more than 3,000 artifacts dating from pre-European contact to the present. The guiding vision of the museum is that visitors will see (Sa'tká:h:tho), enjoy (Ensen'weskwèn), and understand (Sa'nikonhraiénta) the Mohawk culture of Akwesasne. Artifacts, including stone tools that were made thousands of

years ago, are on display in the museum.

While the museum is a home for objects from the past, it also showcases contemporary Mohawk culture and the traditions that are very much alive in the community. Visitors will have a chance to appreciate the skill and creativity of Akwesasne artists in the sweetgrass and splint baskets, beadwork, and carvings on display and in the museum gift shop. The cultural center encourages the continuation of these traditional arts with a wide variety of classes for community members. Currently, the center is developing an exhibit on lacrosse in conjunction with youth from Akwesasne. The exhibit is titled: "Tewa'araton Iakwa'tswa:tha ~ (lacrosse we play)."

"Lacrosse is hugely popular in Canada, the U.S. and in many countries across the world, but many fans are unaware of the Native origins of the game," says Sue Ellen Herne, the museum's program coordinator. "This traveling exhibit, co-curated by Mohawk youth, is based on Mohawk tradition with the overall message: 'Think about how you play the game – and how you live your life.'"

Exhibit advisors have given this message to the youth as guidance, "It's not about you; it's about who you're playing for."

The museum has developed travelling exhibits and educational kits that reach beyond the community of Akwesasne. One of these exhibits, "We Are From Akwesasne," was displayed at the St. Lawrence Islands National Park visitor centre in the summer of 2008. Youth from Akwesasne were also the co-curators of this exhibit – working with consultants, designers, and museum staff in the creation of an exhibit that illuminates the continuing culture and artistic

heritage of Akwesasne. "We Are From Akwesasne" and "Tewa'araton Iakwa'tswa:tha ~ (lacrosse we play)" were funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and "We Are From Akwesasne" had additional funding from the New York State Council on the Arts.

The Akwesasne Cultural Center is located at 321 State Route 37 in Hogansburg, New York. For more information about the museum, call 518-358-2461 or visit the website at akwesasne-culturalcenter.org. To learn more about the Native North American Travelling College call 613-932-9452.

Learn more about the people and stories of Akwesasne by viewing *Voices of Akwesasne*, a series of video vignettes in the park visitor centre at Mallorytown Landing.

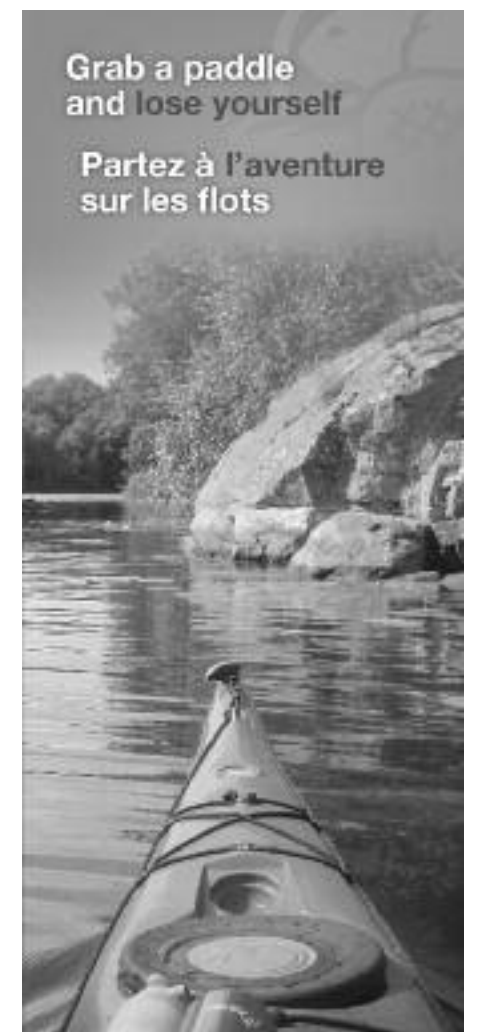


Photo: 1000 Islands Kayaking

Chart your own course

Spectacular paddling for novices and experts alike

"Wherever there is a channel for water, there is a road for the canoe," said Henry David Thoreau. The Thousand Islands furnish a paddler with a dizzying array of routes, nooks, and tucked away channels to explore. There is no more intimate a boating experience than sitting low in a kayak, feeling the coolness of the water through the hull. Imagine silently paddling over the serene remains of a sunken ship from another time, or watching the meandering course of a turtle swimming just a few feet below the surface. These are experiences reserved for the self-propelled boater – the canoeist or kayaker.

Though it may seem out of reach for some, canoeing and kayaking in the Thousand Islands and St. Lawrence Islands National Park is a simple matter of desire. Outfitters in the area provide an array of services and rentals for a variety of experience levels.

The nationally certified instructors at 1000 Islands Kayaking in Gananoque offer a full array of guided tours and comprehensive kayak rental packages for families, couples and beginners. For the intrepid solo paddler, beginner lessons and certification courses are available to build the skills and confidence necessary to navigate the dynamic waters of the Thousand Islands.

"First-time paddlers are very

welcome on our kayaking tours," says Scott Ewart of 1000 Islands Kayaking. "Most of our clients have never been in a kayak before and it is very satisfying to see so many people thrilled at the end of the day that they have found a new activity to fall in love with! It is normal to be nervous for the first time but our fully certified instructors will help coach you through everything you need to know."

The experienced paddlers at Misty Isles Lodge on the 1000 Islands Parkway also offer introductory lessons, guided tours, and rental kayaks and canoes.

"We were the first, in 1998, to offer sea kayak rentals and tours. Sea kayaks are stable, comfortable and seaworthy. It was a dream to introduce this dynamic recreational activity by providing an exciting, challenging and educational experience in one of the most beautiful waterways in the world," says Gayle Grant McBride, owner of Misty Isles. "Our extensive beach instruction will make any novice paddler feel comfortable and able. We now offer diverse full-day adventures to give the public a premier experience in the Thousand Islands."

For the more independent paddler, there are many resources available to direct the planning of your Thousand Islands adventure. The Thousand Islands Water Trail, found at paddle1000.com,



Photo: Parks Canada

What's around the next bend? Paddlers explore the meandering channels of the islands.

suggests nine half-day and full-day routes that connect to one another for the option of a longer trip. Planning maps for the routes are provided on the website with identified access points, trip times and lengths, and potential hazards. The website also points out places of historic and natural interest including "quiet trails and sandy beaches, secluded bays, hidden channels, unique geological formations, historic architecture, submerged wrecks, and abandoned homesteads." Other paddling routes are available at www.explorethearch.ca. However, these maps are not

substitutes for marine maps and paddlers that embark without a guide should take the appropriate navigation chart, topographic map or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) chart.

"Paddling the Thousand Islands is very accessible to everyone," says Ewart. "With world class paddling right in your backyard, you can come and relax, rejuvenate, go for a swim, hike some trails, sleep under the stars, cast a fishing line and enjoy the vast beauty of the Thousand Islands. We provide the equipment, nature provides the rest."

But first...

Paddling safety tips

Paddling is a rewarding and unique way to experience St. Lawrence Islands National Park but with great enjoyment comes great responsibility. A safe waterway is everyone's responsibility. Here are some tips modified from paddle1000.com to make your trip as safe and enjoyable as possible.

- **Take courses** – Proper training is the best way to understand and prepare for the risks associated with paddling in a large, dynamic body of water like the St. Lawrence River.

- **Required equipment** – Transport Canada requires all canoes and kayaks to carry the following equipment: Personal Floatation Device properly sized for each individual and approved by the Canadian Coast Guard; a signalling or sounding device; a paddle; a manual bail-out device; a floating rope minimum of 15m or 50 feet in length; and navigation lights in conditions of limited visibility. Check www.ccg-gcc.gc.ca for more details.

- **Paddle with friends** – Travelling in a group makes you more visible to power boaters and ensures that others are nearby to aid in the event of an incident.

- **Watch for other vessels** – The Thousand Islands is often busy with power boating traffic. It is your responsibility to stay clear of powerboats and minimize the amount of time you are in a boating channel. Plan your route ahead of time to avoid the St. Lawrence International Seaway and minimize other channel crossings. When crossing a boating channel, stay together in a tight group, paddle at the speed of the slowest paddler, keep moving until you are safe on the other side, and always choose the shortest possible route.

- **Beware of strong currents** – Refer to a nautical map or check with local outfitters to help identify and avoid areas where the river narrows and currents become stronger and more dangerous.

- **Respect stormy weather** – Check the weather before you depart and pay close attention to

wind direction and speed. While paddling, make sure you are aware of the nearest public landing spot. In emergency situations, the safest landing spot may be on private land but be courteous. Most private landowners will be happy to help.

- **Boat floatation** – In large, open bodies of water like the St. Lawrence River, it is important that your canoe or kayak is outfitted with appropriate floatation - sealed hatches and bulkheads - in the event of a capsize. If your boat does not have adequate floatation, stay close to shore at all times.

- **Stay warm** – Water can be unseasonably cold in the spring, early summer, and fall. Ensure that you dress in warm layers and have an extra, waterproofed set of clothes.

- **Stay in touch** – Let people know where you are going and when you plan to be back. Cell phones and radios can save lives. Dial *16 for the Canadian Coast Guard Rescue Coordination Centre. Give a vessel description, position, nature of problem, and type of assistance required. Contact Marine Search and Rescue (1-800-267-5111) in an emergency situation when a fellow

paddler or other boater is missing and presumed overboard.

- **Be seen and heard** - To prevent collisions, wear a bright coloured lifejacket and travel in condensed groups. Use navigation lights when travelling in low light situations like dawn, dusk, and heavy fog. Both a waterproof head lamp and a white light visible from 360 degrees are recommended. Use an easily accessible pealess whistle to alert others of your presence or distress. Three short blasts signal distress.

- **Be safe** - Reference the Canadian Coast Guard's Safe Boating Guide to make sure you've taken all necessary precautions for a safe trip at www.ccg-gcc.gc.ca.

- **Have the necessary maps and charts** - It's easy to get turned around on the water. It is recommended you take training courses in navigation and carry an appropriate chart or topographic map. Check with local outfitters for courses or on www.paddlecanada.com. Charts and maps can be purchased over the phone, on the internet, or at local marinas and outfitters. Important updates on marine charts and publications are available at www.notmar.com.



Photo: Lisa Werden

University of Guelph student Scott Stevenson drags a blanket to collect ticks.

Researchers assess tick risk

New research in the park has yielded some helpful results to guide park staff and visitors in making informed decisions about tick safety.

University of Guelph graduate student Lisa Werden led a research team last summer that studied the blacklegged ticks found on small mammals captured in the park. Her team tested them to determine whether or not they carried the bacterium that causes Lyme disease.

"So far we have the lab results from the ticks captured in 2009," says Werden. "I used those data to conduct a risk analysis of the 12 sites we studied. Based on visitor numbers and the likelihood that someone will encounter an infected nymphal tick on that island, we have found that four islands top the list in terms of risk: Camelot, Thwartway, Endymion, and

Grenadier."

Werden is quick to point out that blacklegged ticks are found throughout the region, and visitors and residents should take precautions to avoid exposure when enjoying the great outdoors in eastern Ontario.

Dr. Paula Stewart, Medical Officer for the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit, notes that the area of concern may have wider boundaries.

"Ms. Werden's research highlights that the Thousand Islands section of the St. Lawrence continues to be an area where we find infected ticks. New research is also pointing to the possibility of encountering them in other areas of eastern Ontario such as the central portion of the Rideau corridor," says Stewart. "Everyone should take precautions to avoid being bitten by an infected tick."

Both adult and nymphal blacklegged ticks can carry the pathogen that causes Lyme disease, the bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi*, and can transmit it to humans when they bite. However, nymphs generally pose the greatest risk of transmission to humans. Nymphs are most active from mid-May until the end of June, when people are often outside. Adults, on the other hand, are more active in the spring and fall. Nymphs are the size of a poppy seed -- much smaller than adults and therefore more difficult to spot when people check their skin for ticks. Because a tick must feed for 24 to 48 hours before *Borrelia* is transmitted, a nymph that goes undetected and continues to feed may be more likely to transmit the bacteria that causes Lyme disease than an adult tick that is detected and quickly removed.

The bacterium *Anaplasma*, which causes human granulocytic anaplasmosis (HGA) and associated flu-like symptoms, has also been detected in some ticks in the Thousand Islands. Infection can occur immediately upon being bitten by a tick carrying *Anaplasma*. It is another cause for caution when dealing with tick exposure. HGA is more effectively treated if diagnosed early in the course of illness. Most cases of HGA can be cured with a two- to four-week treatment of antibiotics, as long as treatment begins early. Clinical manifestations of HGA can range from mild to life-threatening depending on the patient's age and general health. The ticks in Werden's study are also being checked for HGA. Of the ticks caught on Thwartway Island in 2009, none of those collected in June or August tested positive for *Anaplasma*. However,

Volunteers the heart of a 25-year birding tradition

It's 25 years and counting, or better yet, 25 years of counting for the Grenadier Island Bird Census.

Since 1987, a group of dedicated volunteers and St. Lawrence Islands National Park staff have been gathering data on birds on the island in this mid-May tradition. The park has played a key role in the coordination and transportation to the island, but the heart of the project is the volunteer birders, some of whom have been with the program since the beginning.

Kathleen Burtch was working at the park when the Grenadier count started. Now retired, Burtch still participates. She'll be accompanying a group of North Leeds Birders on this year's count.

To conduct the census, two groups of birders start at opposite ends of the island -- the furthest eastern and western reaches -- and meet in the middle. As they travel, they record the birds they see and hear along the way. This year the annual ritual will include an element of celebration.

"We're going to do a bit of reminiscing, have some lunch, and pull out some of the old photos," says Burtch.

Her favourite spot for birding on the island is on Long Schooner Point on East Grenadier.

"It's a great place to find warblers in those woods, and I feel connected to that area because that's where my family first settled," she says. The Burtch family came to Grenadier Island in the early 19th



Photo: Parks Canada

Park interpreter Marianne Kelly will help with the count this year.

among ticks caught in October, 11% of adults and 4% of nymphs tested positive.

In addition to supporting research, the park continues to inform visitors about the presence of ticks and the need to pay special attention to tick bites.

"The park communicates with visitors via our park website, the *Pitch Pine Post*, signs on park islands and by working with the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit," says Sophie Borcoman, the park's visitor experience manager.

Tick research will continue in the park, with a focus on the factors that influence tick populations and their prevalence of infection.

"We saw considerable changes in tick populations between 2009 and 2010 and will continue to monitor the tick populations by dragging fabric to collect ticks," says Werden. "On some of the islands, we saw many more ticks in 2010. We will be looking at what might have caused that difference from 2009 - are the tick populations

increasing everywhere? Did weather play a role? We will be collecting ticks again this year so that we can begin to monitor long-term trends."

Cliffen attributes the unpredictable finds to the early spring timing of the count. Many birds are still migrating at that time, and there is often a different mix of species on the island than that which may be found on the mainland.

"Every year is quite different," says Cliffen. "A lot of times you go out on a count expecting the same cast of characters, but on Grenadier, one year you might see yellow-throated vireos, the next you'll see black-throated blue warblers."

The long-running bird census helps the park understand what bird species use the island during migration, provides access to the island for expert volunteer birders, and adds information to the big picture of what's happening to bird populations in Canada. The event also provides an opportunity for new park staff to hone their identification skills by accompanying some very experienced birders.

"It was always a good chance to get new park naturalists out to get some field experience and to get to know one of the park islands," remembers Ken Robinson, who took part in the count for many years as a supervisor of park interpreters. Robinson is still involved in the count.

"I've never missed it," says Robinson. "If it was running, I was there."

The Grenadier Island Bird Census takes place every year in May.

WARNING

Blacklegged ticks are present in this region. These ticks can transmit Lyme disease and human granulocytic anaplasmosis (HGA), two serious and potentially disabling infections.

Check your body thoroughly for ticks after you have spent time outdoors. Ticks range in size from 1-5 mm. If you have been bitten, remove the tick immediately and see your doctor. For more information, contact the park office at Mallorytown Landing (613-923-5261) or your local health unit.

To stay safe:

- Stay on marked trails.
- When hiking, wear insect repellent containing DEET, long sleeves, pants and hiking boots. Tuck pants into your socks. Avoid wearing sandals or bare feet.
- When you return from a day outdoors, check your body thoroughly for ticks.
- Always keep your pets on a leash and on the trails.



Photo: Parks Canada

Your help needed to slow spread of emerald ash borer

While truckers, travellers, and hungry families are the mainstays of the 401 service centre at Mallo-rytown, an unexpected green hitchhiker caused a bit of stir when it dropped in, settled into an ash tree there, and made a family. This is where the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) discovered the invasive insect, called the emerald ash borer, in one of their research traps in 2010.

The emerald ash borer is a small, slender, metallic green insect that infests and kills ash trees. Native to Asia, the insect was first spotted in Detroit in 2002 and has since become an invasive alien pest in Canada.

Though there have been no discoveries of the pest in St. Lawrence Islands National Park, the discovery at the 401 service centre was not far from park boundaries. In order to monitor the situation, resource conservation technicians assess 36 forest plots in the park and the greater park ecosystem. They are trained by the CFIA to detect stem defects and crown dieback associated with emerald ash borer infestations.

In addition, monitoring in 2011 will include the establishment of permanent emerald ash borer monitoring plots and traps



Photo: David Cappaert

Adult emerald ash borers are narrow, metallic blue-green beetles that measure 8.5-14.0 mm.

at several locations throughout the park. Park staff will continue to work with and draw expertise from the CFIA and other partners to slow the spread of emerald ash borer in the park and surrounding region.

The CFIA and Parks Canada are working to keep the emerald ash borer and its damaging impacts away from St. Lawrence Islands National Park and the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville. As part of these efforts, a park-wide ban on unapproved firewood has been put in place for the 2011 season. This means that visitors will not be permitted to

bring their own firewood into the park. Firewood will be available to be purchased from the park for the purpose of having a campfire on a designated camping site. The park will purchase all of its firewood from a CFIA-approved site under the Emerald Ash Borer Approved Facility Compliance Program (EABAFCP). This policy was put in place to ensure that all campfires within the park are burning EABAFCP-certified wood and to ensure that the ecological integrity and beauty of St. Lawrence Islands National Park is protected.

Firewood and other regula-

tions extend outside park boundaries as well. The CFIA regulates the movement of ash tree materials, all types of firewood, vehicles that have been used to transport ash materials, and yard waste within the boundaries of regulated areas. These legal boundaries have recently been extended from the Ottawa/Gatineau region to include the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville. Respecting the regulations within these boundaries will slow the spread of emerald ash borer and violation of these restrictions is subject to a fine. Regulated materials include ash trees (whole or parts), ash nursery stock, ash logs, ash lumber, newly manufactured wood packaging made from ash, ash wood or bark, and ash wood chips or bark chips.

The CFIA is also taking actions to monitor the landscape, particularly high-risk areas, for these pests. Infestations are detected and population levels are monitored through the use of traps, visual surveys, and bark and branch sampling.

Landowners are being asked to monitor their own ash trees for signs and symptoms of emerald ash borer and report them by phone to the CFIA at 1-800-442-2342 or electronically at www.inspection.gc.ca.

Have you seen this green alien?

Emerald ash borers infest ash trees by laying eggs under the bark. These eggs hatch into larvae that create networks of tunnels, called galleries, as they eat away the wood of the tree. These galleries eventually cut off the water and nutrients that flow up and down the trunk of the tree. The larvae then pupate, hatch into adults, and emerge from the tree through "D" shaped holes.

To identify the presence of emerald ash borer, look for:



Photo: Ches Caister

Thinning and dieback in the uppermost branches of an ash tree are symptoms of an emerald ash borer infestation.

1. Dead or dying ash trees.
2. Thinning and dieback in the uppermost part of the ash tree as nutrient transportation is blocked.



Photo: Jerry Dowdling

Emerald ash borer larva next to a network of S-shaped galleries.

3. Presence of adult beetles or larvae.
4. Feeding tunnels (galleries) under the bark of the tree that form an S-shaped pattern.



Photo: CFIA

Epicormic shoots – new shoots growing from the trunk or branches – are another sign of an emerald ash borer infestation.

5. Green shoots, called epicormic shoots, may grow from the trunk or branches as the tree attempts to circumvent the damage and transport nutrients.
6. "D" shaped holes in the bark.



Photo: Troy Kimoto

S-shaped galleries like this one are made as larvae feed under the bark of an infested ash tree. D-shaped holes are created as they exit the tree.

7. Irregular notches in leaves from feeding adults.
8. Callous tissue may form over the galleries and cause vertical cracks in the bark.
9. Increased woodpecker activity as they feed off the infested tree.



Photo: City of Ottawa

This three-sided trap attracts emerald ash borers with a chemical and traps them in sticky paste.

The beetle found in Mallo-rytown was caught on a trap developed by the Canadian Forest Service. The plastic trap, called a prism trap, has three sides covered with a sticky paste and is baited with a chemical that attracts adult beetles.

Emerald ash borer traps will be set up to survey their presence in St. Lawrence Islands National Park and eastern Ontario. If you see one of these traps, PLEASE DO NOT TAMPER WITH IT.

**Report emerald ash borers
to the CFIA
1-800-442-2342
www.inspection.gc.ca**

Coristine a judge for 2011 photo contest

Hearty congratulation to the winners of the 2010 photo contest! The race was close, the submissions were beautiful and in the end there were 3 category winners.

"It was a tough job," said Marianne Kelly, acting interpretation coordinator after serving as a judge in the 2010 photo contest. "There were unique and beautiful details in each shot. It was very hard to pick."

Paul Biezing took the prize for the Biodiversity category with his great photo of a pileated woodpecker on Constance Island. David Chase was the youngest winner in the category of Junior Snapshots with his action shot of a common loon taking off. His title, "Start Your Engines" captures the image perfectly. Finally, Wendy Healey took the Exploring Jones Creek category prize with her photo of a group of hikers on one of the lush new trails at Jones Creek.

Next year's photo contest

promises even tougher competition. That's why we've invited veteran photographer of the Thousand Islands Ian Coristine to be our guest celebrity judge. He may dole out a few photography tips, too.

"I'm really looking forward to seeing my favourite place through the eyes of others who share my love for it. Go do it justice"

"A renowned photographer and inspirational friend, Carl Hiebert once offered to share with me 'The secret to photography,'" recounts Coristine. "Eager to hear all he had to say, I settled in for a long listen. All I got were three words: 'Just show up.'"

"I've come to know there is no better advice than Carl's, though in truth, a fabulous subject definitely helps and I know of no better one than our river. I'm really looking forward to seeing my favourite place through the eyes of others who share my love for it. Go do it justice."

In addition, 2011 will see new categories and new prizes like photography gift certificates, books, and accessories. Contestants may



Photo: David Chase

David Chase's photo entitled "Start Your Engines" took the prize in the Junior Snapshots category of the 2010 Photo Contest.

be able to submit photographs via Flickr.com. In addition, a new style of photography is also being proposed to competitors.

"The experiential photography style gives you the impression that you're the person in the scene," says Kelly. "It's a creative take on photography. It really puts you in the picture."

Look for the 2011 Photo Contest categories, rules and entry forms on St. Lawrence Islands National Park's website www.pc.gc.ca/sli.

Park wardens ensure safety and fairness

Travis Halliday is part of a team of new park wardens hired by Parks Canada to work in eastern Ontario. He and his fellow wardens Mike Ellsworth and Chris Earl began their work at the park last summer. Halliday took the time to reflect on the summer of 2010 in a short interview with interpretation coordinator Marianne Kelly.

Kelly: How did the first season of the new warden service go at St. Lawrence Islands National Park?

Halliday: The first year at St. Lawrence Islands National Park was challenging and exciting. With the busy season fast approaching, the new park wardens had to learn the river and the locations of park islands and docks quickly. It was exciting to discover a new park and meet a lot of visitors day to day.

Kelly: What was the most common infraction?

Halliday: The most common infractions were park user permit violations, primarily paying of parking and docking fees.

Kelly: Why are these fees important?

Halliday: As there are a lot of paying customers visiting the park it is often discouraging for them to see or know that others are using the space and facilities without paying. It is also important because these fees go directly to the upkeep and maintenance of park docks and facilities. Smaller fee intake coupled with lower visitor numbers can ultimately result in less service and upkeep.

Kelly: How will regulations be implemented this summer?

Halliday: It is important to ensure that visitors are aware of ALL the rules and regulations at St. Lawrence Islands National Park, including the payment of fees upon arrival. Signage and park staff are there to remind visitors that these rules and regulations apply to everyone. In instances where compliance is still not attained law enforcement options will be used. As the new park wardens are now familiar with park we will be better able to focus on problem areas and chronic issues. It is our goal to ensure all visitors have an enjoyable and memorable experience.



Photo: Ian Coristine

"Dawn, Lake Fleet Islands" by veteran Thousand Islands photographer Ian Coristine is just one of the awe inspiring photographs in Canada's National Parks: A Celebration. Published on Banff National Park's 125th birthday, this collection of photographs commemorates the Canadian landscape and Canada's National Parks.

Facebook on the job?

Parks Canada ventures into new media

In most workplaces surfing Facebook, Youtube or Twitter is frowned upon. This is not the case for Paul Galipeau, one of Parks Canada's new Internet Content and New Media Officers.

Galipeau's efforts are aimed at connecting a new generation – young, urban, and new Canadians – to Parks Canada's unique natural and cultural places. Young and "plugged in" citizens that live in Montreal, Ottawa, Kingston, and Toronto may not have many opportunities to visit National Parks or National Historic Sites. However, an online presence allows them to have meaningful experiences with parks from their own desk or living room.

"So much of nature we will never witness with our own eyes," says Galipeau, "but that doesn't

mean that we can't appreciate its beauty and significance."

While surfing Parks Canada's Youtube channel, viewers can witness a harrowing mountain rescue in Banff National Park or frolicking black-footed ferrets – the first to be seen in Canada in 70 years – from the comfort of their own homes.

So where can we find Parks Canada on the internet?

Canadians can "like" Parks Canada on Facebook and follow @ParksCanada on twitter.com and learn about activities and events taking place at the park. "I like when we get funny on Twitter," Galipeau says, smiling. "When Puksaskwa National Park conducted a prescribed fire on February 14, they called their tweet 'Burning Love,' which is completely appropriate but also really good for a laugh."

When asked about his favourite part of the job he answers without hesitation, "The

variety. Today, I'm at St. Lawrence Islands National Park taking video of a shipwreck and three weeks ago I was lying in the snow on the shore of the St. Lawrence River as a group of reenactors were firing antique rifles at me." The shots were blanks, of course, and Galipeau used his camera to take a few shots himself.

Viewers can see Galipeau's creativity this summer after he completes a number of videos that feature St. Lawrence Islands National Park. One will document the move of the historic gunboat at Mallorytown Landing to its new home at Fort Wellington National Historic Site in Prescott.

Of course, Canadians can always access visitor information, activities and events, public safety notices, contests, publications and more on St. Lawrence Islands National Park's website, parksCanada.gc.ca/sli.

Park continues generator use phase-out consultation

St. Lawrence Islands National Park continues to consult with visitors on how they would like to see the designation of more generator-free islands to proceed.

In 2010, in response to the concerns of boaters who felt that they hadn't been properly notified of the change, the park delayed the planned expansion of generator-free sites that would include all islands with the exception of McDonald, Beau Rivage and Central Grenadier. In this plan, generators would also be permitted at Mallorytown Landing.

Taking into consideration the feedback received from some visitors that spring, park managers took the decision to communicate further with user groups on the best approach to phase in changes to the island service model. The park will consult with visitors in 2012 through its Visitor Information Program survey as to how they would like this process to unfold.

"The Visitor Information Program is a very reliable method of getting this information from boaters," says visitor experience manager Sophie Borcoman. "The survey is based in sound social science and will help us to phase in the new island service model."

This new round of consultation follows several years of public feedback and communication on the subject of generator use in the park. Consultation included public meetings in the fall of 2007 to which all season pass holders and the community at large were invited through newspaper ads and a mailed newsletter outlining the proposed changes to the service

offer on the islands. In addition, a survey was mailed to all season pass holders in the spring of 2008 and efforts were made to reach boaters who were not season pass holders through an on-the-dock survey.

While the park has delayed the phase-in due to some boaters' concerns, there are also boaters who support the implementation of the plan.

"The park has been diligent in giving long-term notice of these changes and has progressively implemented the changes in a reasonable manner," wrote long-time visitor Graham Mutch in a letter to the park last summer. "As a result of notification from the park about impending changes, we installed solar panels on our boat years ago, as have numerous other boaters."

During the 2011 operating season, generator-use islands will remain as they were during the 2010 operating season. As such, generator use will be permitted at Mallorytown Landing and on the following islands: Aubrey, Beau Rivage, Camelot, Central Grenadier, Grenadier West, Constance, Georgina, Gordon, Hill, and McDonald.

The park maintains a commitment to provide a choice of services to all user groups, including seasonal boaters, day users, kayakers and canoeists.

Did you know?

Visitors' pack-out and recycling efforts in 2010 reduced the garbage produced in the park to half of that produced in 2009.



Photo: Parks Canada

Artist's rendering of the south side of the Fort Wellington visitor centre.

Gunboat finds a new home at Fort Wellington

The Brown's Bay vessel will be heading downriver this year, but this voyage won't be anything like its travels on the St. Lawrence.

For this trip, the 19th-century boat will be heading overland with a crew of specialists – conservators, underwater archaeologists, and expert movers – who will prepare and monitor the boat in the move between its current display space at Mallorytown Landing and its new home at Fort Wellington National Historic Site in Prescott.

The vessel will be lifted by a large crane and hauled on a flatbed trailer. Stabilizing such a large artefact for transport will include an assessment of the existing supports to ensure that they are strong enough to withstand the move and keep the hull structures intact. The movers will build up from the wooden beams on which the gunboat rests and form a large shipping crate around it.

"Once the vessel is relocated to its temporary housing at the new site it will be sealed and monitored to ensure that it is maintained in a stable and protected environment while the new building is constructed around it," says conservator Flora Davidson.

The gunboat will be the focal point around which stories from the War of 1812 are presented in the fort's new visitor centre. Exhibit planner Carla Morse sees this as an opportunity to improve the telling of both the gunboat's and the fort's stories.

"The move of the gunboat wreck from St. Lawrence Islands National Park to the fort later this year provides a wonderful opportunity to connect the fort with the river in a way that has not been done before."

The official opening of Fort Wellington's new visitor centre is scheduled for May 2012.

PARK FACILITY UPDATE

Completed in 2010

- ✓ Installation of a new dock, deck and ramp at Endymion Island.
- ✓ Repair of Georgina Island trails affected by the 2009 prescribed burn.
- ✓ Installation of new steel ramps and railings on the central dock on Gordon Island and two new steel ramps on McDonald Island.
- ✓ Ongoing maintenance and repair of island trails.
- ✓ Removal of storm-damaged trees and repairs to stairs, ramps, and docks damaged by winter storms.
- ✓ Ongoing installation of new signs as part of the Parks Canada Federal Identity Program.
- ✓ Construction of a floating boardwalk on the Wolf Trail at Jones Creek.
- ✓ Completion of a full assessment of visitor facilities; began repair and replacement of assets in critical condition (picnic tables, campsites, shelters, docks, etc.).
- ✓ Installation of new animal-proof garbage and recycling containers.

Your fees at work

Low power, high comfort

We love the fact that some of the islands in St. Lawrence Islands National Park are designated as "no generator." It appeals to the way we want to boat. This article provides a brief description of how we manage our cruising in a boat that has no generator.

*David Pearson and
Bonnie Lindsay
Buster*

"Buster" is a 1971 Alwest 370, an aluminum power cruiser with twin gas engines and sleeping accommodation for four... or six ... or two, depending on how friendly you are. When we purchased Buster in 2002 she had a dead engine, a hard-to-start 6.5 kilowatt generator, four weak house batteries and an array of power hungry electric appliances, including an electric stove and water heater, an air conditioning unit, and an amazingly inefficient 12-volt/120-volt fridge. We needed to re-power and we decided to make her more energy efficient at the same time. This included a conscious decision to remove the old generator and not replace it.

Nothing consumes power quite as relentlessly as air conditioning, so that was the first thing to go. With the great swimming in the St. Lawrence to cool us off, removing the air conditioner did not seem like a big sacrifice. Whereas doing without a refrigerator would have, so we replaced the fridge with a more modern AC/DC model that consumes a fraction of the power of other fridges. We didn't need an oven (a barbecue is a good alternative) so the electric range was replaced by a propane cook top. Our hot water tank broke and we have yet to replace it. We are currently heating water in a pot on the stove to wash dishes. Lastly, we replaced the incandescent lights with either compact fluorescents or LED's.

In order to store electricity to run the appliances mentioned above, plus a DVD player and our computers, we installed two banks of six-volt golf cart batteries. We charge the batteries from shore power during the week, which provides enough power to run everything for three days even if we're not being overly careful. For the

few things that still need 120-volt AC power, we installed a 1750-watt inverter and connected it to the boat's electrical system using the wires that used to connect to the generator. This year, the boat is getting a couple of 130-watt solar panels. Based on our calculations, this should extend our ability to hang out away from shore power almost indefinitely.

Our modifications allow us to be good neighbors at a dock – no noisy generator – and were accomplished economically. Replacing the appliances was less than the cost of replacing the old generator, the boat is now lighter, which saves fuel, and our boating season is longer than most, thanks to a propane cabin heater.

Even without such modifications, but with a little planning and conservation, most modern boats can survive a few days away from shore power without needing to run a generator. If you see us on the river, feel free to come see what we have done.

Windstorm damages docks

Park maintenance crews are working hard to repair damage caused by high winds on April 28. The windstorm knocked down trees on hiking trails and shifted docks and boardwalks throughout the park. Some of the damage will be repaired in the course of doing dock improvements and replacements already slated for this year. Project schedules have been shifted to ensure safe access to the park. "In a few cases, boaters may notice some slight differences, but the docks will all be there," says maintenance supervisor Kent Dowsley.

Facilities

Mallorytown Landing

- Visitor centre with live animals, hands-on exhibits, Aboriginal stories, children's activities
- Outdoor exhibits and artwork
- Playground
- Interpretive programs
- 2-km trail with easy and moderate hiking loops
- Boat launch
- Picnic area
- Scenic river views
- Geocaches

Jones Creek trails

- 12-km trail network of easy to difficult trail loops
- Wildlife viewing
- Lookout points
- Scenic wetland boardwalk
- Geocaches

Landon Bay Centre

(Operated by the Barbara Heck Foundation)

- 7-km trail network
- Scenic lookout
- Playground
- Geocaches
- Picnic area
- Campground
- Pool

Islands

- Docks & mooring buoys
- Composting toilets
- Walking trails
- Campsites (12 islands)
- Picnic shelters (14 islands)
- Scenic river views & wildlife
- Garbage & recycling pick-up (3 islands)
- Beaches (2 islands)
- Geocaches (Grenadier Island)
- Potable water (Central Grenadier only)



Hours of Operation

Mallorytown Landing

May 21 to June 5

- 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekends and holidays.

June 11 to September 5

- 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday to Monday.

Fees are payable from May 21 to September 5 for all services, and until October 10 for vehicle with trailer parking and launching.

Jones Creek trails

Open year-round. Parking fees apply May 21 to September 5.

Landon Bay Centre

(Operated by the Barbara Heck Foundation)

Open year-round. Parking fee for Jones Creek and Mallorytown Landing covers trail use at Landon Bay May 21 to September 5. Separate fees apply for other services and off-season use. For more information visit www.landonbay.org.

Islands

Services and facilities are maintained from Victoria Day to Thanksgiving (May 21 to October 10). Fees are payable by self-registration.

Park Administration Office

8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday, year round.

To learn about fees & for more information contact:

613-923-5261

ont-sli@pc.gc.ca

Events & Programs

For more information or to pre-register for events, call 613-923-5261 or email ont-sli@pc.gc.ca. All events take place at the Mallorytown Landing visitor centre (1121- 1000 Islands Parkway) unless otherwise noted. Parking fees (\$6.80 per vehicle) apply at Mallorytown Landing and Jones Creek from May 21 to September 5. Additional costs are noted if applicable. Seasonal permits are available.

May 21 – **Visitor Centre opens for 2011** – Meet “Willow,” our resident grey rat snake, and other animals native to Ontario. Check out themystical, silent world of owls with our new travelling exhibit “Northern Owls” from the Royal Ontario Museum. Bring a picnic and explore new outdoor exhibits on Mohawk culture and the stories of local residents who make a difference in our ecosystem.

May 29 – **Doors Open Ontario** - Take advantage of the cultural and natural places in Ontario’s backyard during Doors Open Ontario. Visit St. Lawrence Islands National Park’s visitor centre at Mallorytown Landing or take your friends and family on a hike at our trails at Jones Creek or Landon Bay. Vehicle parking fee does not apply during Doors Open Ontario.

June 25 - **Aboriginal Day** - Celebrate National Aboriginal Day at St. Lawrence Islands National Park’s visitor centre. Discover more about Canada’s Aboriginal cultures on the dazzling shores of the St. Lawrence River in the Thousand Islands, a traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee people. Bring family and friends or meet some new ones in a family friendly afternoon of music, games and activities from 12 to 3 p.m.

July & August – **Feeding Time** – Learn more about what the animals in our ecosystem are eating and how they find and consume their food as we feed the visitor centre’s summer residents. Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2 p.m.

July & August – **Roving Interpretation** – Is fire a friend or foe? What’s happening to the turtles in the river? Watch for park interpreters on the weekends as they rove through the campsites and docks of national park islands to share the stories of St. Lawrence Islands National Park.

July 1 – **Canada Day Celebrations** – Canada Day is extra special this year at St. Lawrence Islands National Park. This year Canada marks the 100th anniversary of Parks Canada, the world’s first national parks service. Today this agency protects 167 national historic sites, 42 national parks and 4 national marine conservation areas. Celebrate with us at the visitor centre as we launch the Xplorer program for kids with special presentations by storyteller Deborah Dunleavy at 12:15 and 1 :30 p.m. Vehicle parking fee does not apply on Canada Day.

September 16-18 & 24-25 – **Art in the Park** - View original art inspired by the beautiful Thousand Islands at the Thousand Islands Fine Arts Association (TIFAA) art exhibit in the Mallorytown Landing visitor centre. Help us celebrate the winners of the 2010 Art in the Park art contest and be inspired to pick up a brush yourself!

October 1 – **Hill Island Hike** – Participate in an off-trail guided hike through the national park’s nature preserve on Hill Island to learn more about the scientific research taking place in this protected area of the park. Meet in the 1000 Islands SkyDeck parking lot on Hill Island. Bridge toll will be charged to access Hill Island. 1 – 3 p.m.

October 14 – **Photo Contest Entry Deadline** – Capture the beauty of St. Lawrence Islands National Park during your visits and enter your photos in our annual photo contest. Contest details and entry forms available at www.pc.gc.ca/sli.

January 19 and 21 – **Winter Snowshoe Hikes** – Join us for a snowshoe hike as we explore winter wonders along our Jones Creek trails. Hikes will run from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. Snowshoes will be provided and beginners are welcome. Meet at the Jones Creek parking lot on the Thousand Islands Parkway north of Brown’s Bay. Cost: donations welcome. Pre-registration is recommended.

How to Get to St. Lawrence Islands NP

St. Lawrence Islands National Park’s mainland trails, visitor centre, and administration office are located on the 1000 Islands Parkway between Brockville and Gananoque, Ontario. The 1000 Islands Parkway is accessible from Highway 401 exits 647 to 685 and from the United States via the 1000 Islands International Bridge.

Mallorytown Landing visitor centre, trails and boat launch: 1121-1000 Islands Parkway (401 exit 675).

Jones Creek trails: 1000 Islands Parkway, 6 km east of Mallorytown Landing (401 exit 675 or 685).

Landon Bay Centre: 302-1000 Islands Parkway (401 exit 647)

Administration office: 2 County Road 5 (401 exit 675).

Islands: More than 20 island properties in the St. Lawrence River between Kingston and Brockville. The park does not provide transportation to the islands.

