

The

Waterstrider

News from CARP's frontline

Introducing CARP's newest project:

Growing ecological health in the Annapolis River watershed

CARP is pleased to announce that we have been successful in receiving funding through Environment Canada's Eco-Action Community Funding Program. This project, formally titled "Growing Ecological Health in the Annapolis River Watershed", is a watershed wide community reforestation and tree planting initiative that will engage community organizations in restoration and tree planting activities.

There are four ecological objectives that this project will contribute to:

1. riparian habitat restoration;
2. the creation of shelterbelts in agricultural landscapes;
3. reforestation and diversification of tree species assemblages, and;
4. greening of urban landscapes within towns and villages.

Angelika Waldow has joined CARP as Project Leader, bringing her knowledge of trees and years of experience in urban forestry to help ensure the success of the project.

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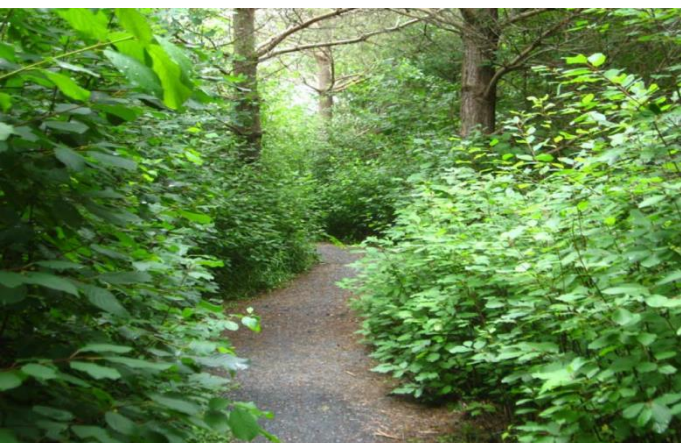
An early partner on this project is the County of Annapolis who received the project with great enthusiasm, and has identified a number of potential areas for planting. CARP is also excited to be able to provide trees for Champlain Elementary School's new natural playground project. CARP will also collaborate with other partners and stakeholders, such as Nova Scotia DNR and agricultural landowners, to identify suitable sites that will contribute to meeting the projects broad ecological enhancement objectives. Additional sites will continue to be identified as the project moves forward.

Another step will be to partner with various community groups and organizations to plan tree planting events at the selected sites. It is hoped that by engaging community members in tree planting activities CARP can help foster a sense of stewardship for our watershed.



Battle of the buckthorn continues

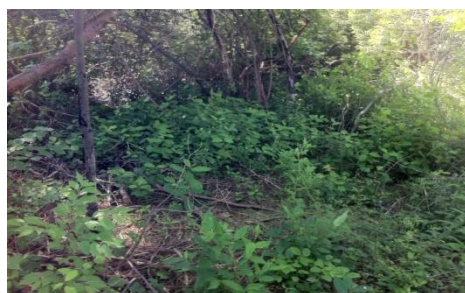
Randy Fredericks



Glossy Buckthorn had choked out nearly all vegetation except the mature coniferous trees when this picture was taken along the wooded portion of the French Basin Trail

It has now been seven years since efforts first began at identifying and removing Glossy Buckthorn (an invasive tree resembling a skinny alder that chokes out native habitats) from the Annapolis Royal Marsh in 2008, when surveys of the perennial weed began. The following year major efforts went underway throughout the summer to eradicate Glossy Buckthorn from the marsh's woodlot, (both the worst hit and most vulnerable area) more details of which may be found in the October, 2008, issue of Waterstrider, and Monsters in the Marsh! Project Report: Removing Glossy Buckthorn (*Rhamnus frangula*) from the Annapolis Royal Marsh by Megan Tardif-Woolgar.

Since that time, much progress has been made on a large portion of the woodlot and native plants, both cultivated and wild, have even started to re-emerge in this area. Efforts have largely shifted to pulling Buckthorn saplings that continue to sprout from seeds laid down up to seven years ago in an effort to deplete the seed bank of this invasive species. Recently a few mature buckthorn trees bearing fruit have been discovered in areas previously thought to be clear and efforts to remove these specimens have been planned and will commence soon. All volunteer interest in any capacity is welcomed, both in helping to identify trouble spots and in removing this monster in the marsh!



Recent efforts have largely involved pulling Glossy Buckthorn Saplings to deplete the seed bank



Wood Turtle Monitoring & Stewardship Update

We have had a successful start to the 2015 wood turtle field season. Visual surveys and radio-tracking commenced in May, after our long winter finally subsided. Visual surveys allow for the collection of 'mark-recapture' data. In mark and recapture studies a portion of a population is captured, marked, and released. In the case of wood turtles, small triangular notches are filed into outside scutes of the turtles shell, giving it a unique identifying number. The turtle is then released where it was found. When the field team is conducting surveys these codes allow individual turtles to be recognized, so that information such as habitat use and population size can be better understood.

Between 2005 and 2008 NS DNR completed wood turtle surveys within the Annapolis River watershed, recording and notching a total of 75 turtles. Since 2012 CARP has resumed survey efforts for this population.

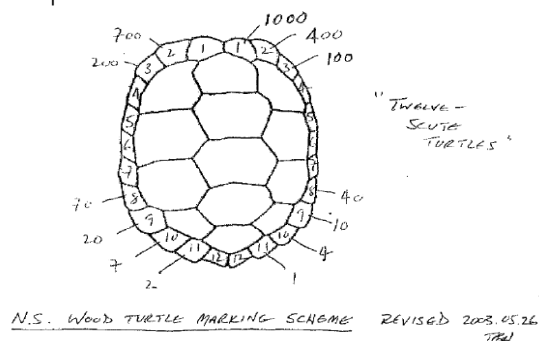
So far this season, visual tracking has revealed many familiar faces, including 11 notched turtles who have been previously recorded during CARP's surveys in 2013 & 2014. Two additional notched turtles who had not been found during CARP's past field seasons have additionally been recorded. Perhaps most exciting are the observations of 4 previously unnotched turtles so far. These 4 turtles were notched, named (Jenny, Ms Chris, Brucie and Jenny), and released, to allow for future re-capture data to be collected.

Two of these previously un-notched turtles were equipped with radio transmitters, to allow for tracking of habitat use and in hope that nesting activity would be observed. Only one of these females, Nina, was observed nesting. Her nest is

currently being protected with an enclosure, to reduce this risk of nest predation.

In total 4 nests are currently being protected and monitored. After the eggs have incubated for 60 days field teams will begin monitoring for hatchling emergence. This monitoring takes a great deal of time, and CARP is currently seeking interested volunteers to join nest monitoring teams.

Once hatchlings emerge, data such as weight and measurements will be recorded, the hatchlings will be notched, and finally they will be released to start their new lives. One interesting fact is that all hatchlings from a single nest are assigned the same notch code. The chances of survival to adulthood are considered to be so low that it is unlikely for more than one of these similarly notched turtles to be recaptured.



The next major phase of the 2015 wood turtle project will be focused on habitat stewardship. CARP is currently in the process of arranging community presentations and meetings, and engaging with landowners to discuss stewardship options for their property. The hope is to work with these landowners to develop stewardship agreements tailored to their properties. Any interested landowners are highly encouraged to get in touch with us!



(L) Two newly observed turtles observed during mating season; (Center) Red Rocket digging her nest; (R) Nina laying her eggs.

Green Thumbs at the Cornwallis Community Garden

Elizabeth McMichael

Green Thumbs is a program for ages 5-12 years offering an opportunity to dig in the dirt, plant seeds and watch with amazement as the process delivers vegetables that can be eaten right on the spot in the Cornwallis Community Gardens. The program is offered in cooperation with the Fundy YMCA and the Cornwallis Community Gardens Association. It is in its second year of operation being led by Elizabeth McMichael, General Manager of the Cornwallis Community Gardens Association with assistance from willing volunteers. The participants have fun learning about growing food. They make toad houses to provide shelter for the friends of the garden and learn that earthworms need to stay in the ground and not get thrown around 'just for fun'. It is a wonderful opportunity to get dirty while learning cooperation and gardening skills. A number of our "Green Thumbs" have been heard walking about saying, with great pride, "I am now a gardener". Hearing this proves that we are well on our way to increasing knowledge and future productivity.



Searching for cucumber beetles.

Checking out the cosmos peeking through the soil.



Interested in joining Green Thumbs? We meet Tuesdays from 6-8. Youth Leaders will walk participants to and from the Fundy YMCA, sign in is at the Y. For more information call: 902-638-9622

Kids' River Walk

Connecting our community to the Annapolis River

On Saturday August 29, the Paradise Area Healthy Active Living Society and CARP are partnering to offer 'Kids' River Walk' an outdoor educational program for youth.

The program will be run at the Paradise resident Barbara Bishop's property, which provides great access to the banks of the Annapolis River and adjacent wetland habitat.

The program will include a variety of hands on activities that will allow youth to explore the natural environment that surrounds them. This includes sampling the stream that crosses the property for aquatic insect larvae, and exploring the wetland habitat for birds, frogs and other wildlife.

Kids will get messy and should dress accordingly (boots, long pants, rain jacket, sun hat). Space is limited in this program, so parents are encouraged to register youth ASAP. Registration is open to youth ages 8-12, and the program runs from 10 am – 2 pm. There is no cost and lunch will be provided.

Meet the field team:

Emma



Randy



Jeff



Shawna



'Our First Year with Track My Fish: Progress and Updates'

Julia Whidden, Danielle Quinn, and Trevor Avery

Track My Fish is an innovative web-based tool designed by Dr. Trevor Avery's Striped Bass Research Team at Acadia University that connects anglers from around the Maritimes to local conservation and research efforts. Dr. Avery's lab has tagged Striped Bass, Winter Skate, and Little Skate at a commercial weir in Bramber, NS, since 2012. To date, approximately 1200 Striped Bass have been tagged, and 2900 Winter and Little skates. The tags used have a unique 4-digit number on one side with 'Acadia Biology', and the www.trackmyfish.ca website on the other. The purpose of this website is to provide anglers with instant feedback for reporting tag information about tagged fish they've recaptured. In the future, the service hopes to be extended to anglers that help with fish tagging through our Striped AmBassador program; hence the name track MY fish!

The current version of this site provides information about the date and location of tagged fish, and also includes a fishing journal option for members to record their personalized catches. Version 2.0, to be released this coming fall, will feature an improved user interface and mapping tool, and more fish information such as the length of the fish when tagged. If a fish is recaptured multiple times, anglers can observe fish growth rates! Also, in version 2.0, anglers who create a free account as Track-My-Fish members may request to follow fish that they've recaptured and released with tag intact. They will receive updates should 'their' fish be recaptured by another angler. Version 2.0 will also have tagging data for additional species, including Atlantic Sturgeon, will also include fishing journal options for a variety of species such as Atlantic salmon, smallmouth bass, and chain pickerel.

So far this year, Track My Fish has received 18 reports of recaptured Striped Bass from around Nova Scotia. These fish have been reported primarily from the Stewiacke/Shubenacadie River system, as well as the Guzzle at the mouth of the Gaspereau River, and the Avon Estuary.

Approximately 50 Striped Bass have been recaptured at the weir this year, adding to the 85 Striped Bass recaptured from past years. A total of 5 skate recaptures have been reported from a commercial weir in Economy, NS, in the past 2 years, which has added to the 189 skate recaptures from the weir since 2012. This recapture information will be used to find

localized movement patterns and growth rates, and to estimate population size.

If you're a passionate angler interested in getting involved with our Striped Bass Research Team, which encompasses both Striped Bass and skate conservation, contact us at www.strippedbass.ca.



Julia Whidden tagging a skate

Biweekly River Guardians results now being posted online

In an effort to raise further awareness about water quality issues affecting the Annapolis River watershed, biweekly River Guardians results are now being posted online (see the web link below).

River Guardians monitor a number of parameters, including: E. coli bacteria, pH, dissolved oxygen, temperature and turbidity. Results are published annually in a watershed report card and further analysis of results is provided in the annual River Guardians Report.

We encourage you to take a look at the results for yourself and share this information among other community members.

<http://www.riverguardians.weebly.com>

CARP's first Annapolis River Festival

Somewhere near 1200 people came together on July 18 to celebrate the Annapolis River during CARP's inaugural Annapolis River Festival. After months of planning the event committee is proud to say that the day exceeded expectations.

From the initial stages of the event CARP was lucky to have such a dedicated and enthusiastic planning committee assembled, led by co-chairs Murray Freeman and Steve Campbell. As a first time event there was some trepidation about how potential sponsors would receive the idea, but the committee was quickly reassured by the outstanding amount of support from local businesses. The day itself would not have been possible without the almost 100 volunteers who assisted in every way imaginable.

We heard from community members across the watershed that they feel the recreational potential of the Annapolis River is vastly overlooked, and the festival seemed to spark a great deal of interest and excitement in exploring this potential. The day started off with 180 participants from 9 teams gathering for the first dragon races ever to be held on the Annapolis. The Campbell Corner Community College Mudhens took the prize for fastest time, Valley Credit Union won the top fundraising award, and the Scotiabank River Bankers won the team spirit award. Thanks to the contributions of the 9 registered teams, CARP was able to raise an additional \$5000 in match funds provided by Scotiabank.

Participant response was so positive that we are already thinking about how the Festival can be built on and improved for the future. Anyone who attended is invited to complete a feedback survey, found <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/R9YYB7C>.

Final numbers are still being calculated, but we will soon announce the fundraising outcome from the Festival. For photos and other highlights from the Festival keep an eye on our website: www.annapolisriver.ca/riverfest.



[Unofficial] world record holders for fastest dragon boat on the Annapolis River, Campbell Corner Community College

Stay in the loop:



www.annapolisriver.ca



<http://www.facebook.com/CleanAnnapolisRiverProject>



@CARPAnnapolis

Thank you to our current project funders



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