

Westmoreland River Watershed Group (WRWG)

ALL ARE WELCOME to our AGM on April 8, 7 pm, Crapaud Community Hall. The evening will feature a presentation by Dr. Gerry Johnson of Halibut PEI in Victoria. Dr. Johnson will particularly address the environmental issues that his company has to take into account in raising halibut and what systems they have in place to deal with them. This will be a very interesting talk. This is also the time to show your support for our watershed work by becoming a member (or renewing) for ONLY \$10. Our watershed is a living resource for the entire community. Plans are well under way for this summer season, including rechecking the restoration work on the east branch done in the past couple of years, and assessing what needs to be done on the west branch. Restoration work on that branch, tree planting, etc., will be started and continue in 2016. We are also excited about Phase 2 of the pond restoration on Rte. 13 and development of the adjacent Westmoreland River Heritage Park. We hope to have a ribbon-cutting Open Day later in the season.

DeSable River Enhancement & Activity Management (DREAM)

From 2008-14, DeSable Estuary was one of the participating Maritime sites in the Community Aquatic Monitoring Program. As the program ends here we look back and note valuable "finds" in addition to program data collection. For example, Atlantic salmon par appeared in 2013. Numerous young flatfish species are out there, feeding osprey and eagles. Up to several metres of erosion per year have been proven along the western shore.

It is promising that eel grass has been observed for two years attempting to re-colonize the eastern outer estuary. Eel grass is an indicator of healthy environments. The loss of eel grass is associated with loss of commercially valuable species, including shellfish, whose young use eel grass beds as nurseries. In the 1930's, 90% of eel grass in eastern North America was destroyed by disease. It is again thinning. Eel grass beds are more productive than rain forests. Planners in coastal US cities are working to develop such beds to help protect from storm-related flooding. At points, the western estuary has been seen to be eroding badly and, for example if these grasses could establish there, it may slow the loss of soils and affect the shallowing of the estuary. See you in May at Eric's Day!

FYI: Under-appreciated sea grass can do all the following: provide habitat, produce oxygen and capture carbon, provide food for waterfowl and marine animals, use surplus nutrients from upstream, filter toxins and sediment from water and protect land from erosion. It was once a far more abundant and central feature of estuaries than it is now but, encouraged, it may help with several problems plaguing our estuaries today. It is a "keystone species" in some Atlantic conservation programs. Eel grass is the common North Atlantic species of sea grass. These evolved from land grasses, look similar and flower, but spend their entire life cycles in water, and form "meadows" under surface. Dried eel grass is familiar to many as it has been used in past as a foundation insulation and a fertilizer/mulch.

Tryon River Watershed Cooperative (TRWC)

Tryon's salt marsh is very important both for resident life in the area and for migratory birdlife. Larger marshes like this are relatively rare and precious on PEI as compared to the mainland Gulf coast or Bay of Fundy. Salt marshes form in the Tryon mudflat area in a somewhat sheltered tidal zone where salt and fresh water mix. Because of salt presence and root immersion, the varied species of grasses and grass-like plants are specially adapted to live there. They form extremely productive communities and fulfill similar roles as do eel grass beds (see FYI, above), though are higher, above sea level more of the time and so support different inhabitants. Cordgrass forms mats in the low marsh, protecting the upper marsh from destructive wave action. In the upper marsh a greater variety of plant life grows, as one can see when taking a stroll on the trails at the Tryon Parks. We tend to think of marshes like this one to be unchanging, but they actually move inland over time, because sea levels historically rise about a foot a century, apart from climate change. The richness of life led to early settlement near marshes, but in future, a balance between human needs and structures and wetland migration has to be made or there can be net marsh loss, a loss to all. In the next months, this marsh will become very busy. Come out and enjoy the Spring migrations show. Work which was begun on the West branch of the Tryon River last year will be rechecked and continued to completion this season. We thank all those property owners for their continuing support.

Augustine Cove- Cape Traverse Group (AC-CT)

Believe it or not spring is here... There is a benefit to all this snow; cleaning and prepping nest boxes is a breeze. No ladder necessary. Be sure that any debris from last year is removed and repairs are completed. Some people add wood shavings but it isn't necessary. Dryer lint can be dropped in shrubs for the birds to gather up. Don't use left over thread from sewing projects as it can wrap around the chicks. There have been some wonderful bird sightings on PEI this year which can be seen on Birders of PEI Facebook page. This is also a good time to do any thinning of saplings or pruning of fruit trees. If you have a tree with two 'leaders' coming out of the top remove the weakest to improve the strength of the one remaining. It's been a super winter for skiing and snow shoeing... enjoy what remains as we will be complaining about humidity soon enough. See you at the AGM.

Membership and /or	Name _____	
Donation Form	Civic Address _____	
South Shore Watershed Assoc.	Mailing Address _____	
(SSWA)	Email _____	Phone _____
PO Box 123	Annual Membership Fee	\$10.00
Crapaud PE C0A1J0	Donation	\$
SSWA is a registered charity and can issue charitable tax receipts	Total	\$

Please make your cheque payable to SSWA

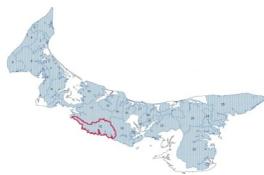
Thank You ! Would you like your local watershed group to contact you ? y___ n___

Spring,
2015

Volume 4;
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SSWA is online:
www.sswa.ca
Email:
sswa@sswa.ca

Registered Canadian
Charity
#81018-9407-RR0001



*Lots More
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**WRWG Annual
General Meeting**
Wed., April 8, 7 pm
Crapaud Comm. Hall

SSWA AGM
Crapaud Comm. Hall
Thurs., April 23, 7 pm
Storm Date:

Thurs., April 30, 7 pm

Eric's Day In May
(DREAM Volunteer Day)
Linden Hill Pond

Inviting those who
signed a Nest Box
Agreement last fall: if
you would like to register
your nest box, just drop
us a line at
sswa@sswa.ca

**2014-2015 SSWA
Board of Directors:**
Martha Howatt,
Augustine Cove
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Tryon



Photo: Ron Arvidson

ALUS : One Farm's Experience

Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) is a voluntary program for PEI farmers and landowners. The goals of the program are:

- Reduce soil erosion and siltation of watercourses and wetlands
- Improve water quality
- Improve and increase wildlife habitat
- Reduce the impacts of climate change

Our farm became involved with this program in its first year, 2008 as there were many aspects of the program we felt would benefit us, and we continue to support its existence and expansion. For years we had been changing how we managed some of our more sensitive and vulnerable lands. Techniques such as residue management, strip and fall cover cropping, berms and increased buffer zones are all part of regular practice on most farms today. However, ALUS was the first program that recognized these measures and the ongoing cost of their implementation to the landowner, in this case, our farm. This was valuable for several reasons; it vindicated the work we, as farmers and stewards of the land, had been involved with, it paid an annual fee to offset the cost of the maintenance of the structures or the value of the land that had been lost for production and, it encouraged the setting aside of the marginal parcels to ensure that the best cropping decisions were made relative to the land's ability to be sustainable.

The ALUS program established a benchmark where land practices in the interests of the "public good" were eligible for payment to help mitigate the costs borne by the landowner. Agriculture depends on the value and productivity of the land; those who make this their life-long work are constantly pressured to produce more with less. Attitudes and management practices have changed over the years and programs like Alternate Land Use Services are good news stories for all the stakeholders on our unique island.

Duane MacDonald
MacDonald Brothers Farm



Photo: Work crew (big yellow machines behind camera) after replacement of badly damaged bridge upstream of pond on Rte. 13.

SSWA Annual Meeting & Photo Awards

SSWA holds its Annual General Meeting on Thursday, April 23, at 7:00 pm, at Crapaud Community Hall. In addition to official reporting, including details of the busiest season yet, exciting plans for 2015 will be unveiled for this dynamic organization. The AGM is the finale for the SSWA Annual Photo Contest and all regional category images and Grand Prize selections will be on display. Respected professional photographer, Doris Chandler again provided contest judging of the dozens of wonderful images SSWA received. Very sincere thanks to her and to all who participated. Your photos allow us all to share the beauty of our watersheds and enable SSWA to share these images further in its publications. One photo category, Cherished Older Watershed Images, remains to be judged at the AGM. You may still bring 5 X 7" copies to the meeting. We will add them to the entries sent in. One will receive a \$50. Prize. Refreshments will be served. See you there !