

The Wake-Robin

Newsletter of the Sault Naturalists of Ontario and Michigan

Volume 50, Number 4, December, 2004



Our mailing address:

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Annual Dinner Meeting

February 8th. - At Sault College
Stephanie Mills will speak.
See pages 2 and 6 for details.

Program - Thumbnails

Dec 14. Annual Holiday Get-together.
Jan. 11. Unwanted Insects.
Feb. 8. Annual Dinner & Meeting
March 8. Resource management in
South Africa.
April 12. The Arctic National Wildlife
Refuge.
May 3. To be announced
June 14. Polar Bears of Churchill

Publication Deadlines for the Wake-Robin and Annual Report

Publication Target

September meeting
December meeting
February AGM
May meeting

Last date for submissions

August 15
November 15
January 15
April 15

Please keep outing reports to about a half page. Accompanying illustrations are welcome.

Winter and Spring Program

December 14, 2004, Central United Methodist Church. Annual Holiday Get-together. Responsive presentation on special places that have been visited frequently by the Sault Naturalists. Gladys Wallwork will be showing some slides of these places and you'll be invited to describe your experiences there and perhaps your feelings for a place, if you wish. So don't bring slides; bring your memories instead! The places should include King Mountain, Pukaskwa National Park, Twin Falls, and other places visited on the waterfalls tours in Ontario; and Tahquamenon Falls, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, Wilderness Park, and Drummond Island in Michigan.

January 11, 2005, Central United Methodist Church Dr. Taylor Scarr, Provincial Entomologist for Ontario. "Unwanted Insect Immigrants." Dr. Scarr will speak on the threats to the Great Lakes Basin posed by



invasive terrestrial insect species. He will focus on invasions of the emerald ash borer and Asian longhorn beetle in Ontario and Michigan, describing their biology and occurrence, the damage they cause, and methods for their control.

Annual Dinner and Meeting. February 8, 2005, Sault College Cafeteria, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario (Refer to the box on page 6 for more information and directions.) **Stephanie Mills, internationally renowned ecologist,**

author and speaker. "Preserving the Environment and Living in Harmony with the Natural World." Mills received public acclaim for her college commencement speech, in which she decried the population explosion and mankind's ultimately destructive materialism. Since then she has been on the leading edge of ecological issues, and was named as one of the world's leading visionaries by the Utne Reader. Mills has participated in several international symposia in venues ranging from a United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to a conference on "Rethinking Progress" in Ladakh. She is the author of ***In Service of the Wild: Restoring and Inhabiting Damaged Land and Whatever Happened to Ecology?*** and is the current editor of ***Turning Away from Technology***. Her most recent work, ***Epicurian Simplicity***, concerns the pleasures and purposes of simple living. Her articles, essays and reviews have appeared in a variety of publications, ranging from ***The Whole Earth Catalog***, ***Orion***, and ***Sierra to Glamour*** and the ***Encyclopedia Britannica Book of the Year***. Mills lives in Michigan's Leelenau Peninsula.

March 8, 2005, Central United Methodist Church. Sally Childs, Professor of Recreation Studies and Exercise Science at Lake Superior State University. "Resource Management in South Africa." Prof. Childs led a group of LSSU students on a trip to South Africa, where they earned university credits for their work. The focus of the university experience was on resource management in the private and public sectors.

April 12, 2005, Central United Methodist Church. Chad Kister, Alaska Coalition. "The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge." Chad will give a slide presentation intended to inspire people to help save the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), the largest wilderness area left in North America. He backpacked and rafted more than 100 miles through the refuge, living

off the roots, berries, greens and fish that he gathered and caught. His presentation will show the imminent need to save the ANWR from proposed oil development. He will request donations from the audience to help cover his travel expenses (donations are optional).

May 3, 2005, Great Lakes Forestry Centre.

Kees van Frankenhuyzen. Topic to be announced.

June 14, 2005, Great Lakes Forestry Centre. David Euler, former Dean of Forestry at Lakehead University. "The Polar Bears of Churchill." Polar bears, the largest North American carnivores, live on the sea ice for most of the year, where they find and eat seals. However, the Hudson Bay population of bears has to move onto land during the summer when the ice has melted on the Bay. In late October or November the ice forms again on Hudson Bay near Churchill, Manitoba and the bears gather there to wait until the sea ice is hard enough to start hunting for seals again. Each year some 12,000 people also migrate to Churchill to watch and study the bears. Dave Euler led a Quest tour to Churchill in

November, 2004. He will discuss the bears, their ecology and the possible threats to this population from global warming.



Photo by Dave Euler

General Meetings

Time: 7:30 p.m; second Tuesday of each month, except May (first Tuesday)

NOTE: Change in venue for Ontario general meetings.

Place: Sault Ontario, Great Lakes Forestry Centre, 1219 Queen Street East, Sault Ste Marie, ON.

Sault Michigan, Central Methodist United Church, Corner of Spruce and Court St.

Schedule: (Unless noted otherwise in program description)

September-November	Great Lakes Forestry Centre
December and January	Central Methodist-United Church
February	Annual Dinner Meeting- location varies
March and April	Central Methodist United Church
May and June	Great Lakes Forestry Centre

Potpourri

American Bird Conservancy Wind Energy Policy Update

In light of the presentation given to us on October 12 by Steve Kent and David Stephenson and their proposal for siting of wind turbines in the Ontario townships of Prince, Dennis, and Pennefather, the recently completed **Wind Energy and Birds Policy** of the American Bird Conservancy is of interest. The comprehensive ABC Wind Energy Policy may be viewed at:

<http://www.abcbirds.org/policy/windenergy.htm>. The ABC is of the opinion that with proper siting, operation, and monitoring, wind energy can provide clean, renewable energy with minimal impacts to birds or to bats. It is emphasized, however, that prior to approval of new such projects, and before construction begins,

potential risks to birds and bats should be evaluated through site analyses, including assessments of bird and bat abundance, timing and magnitude of migration, and habitat use patterns. Among the extensive suggestions made, it is recommended that "locating turbines in known local bird migration pathways, in areas where birds are highly concentrated, or in areas or landscape

features known to attract large numbers of raptors should be avoided, unless mortality risk has been analyzed and likelihood of significant mortality has been ruled out."

Carl Linhart



A recent article in the Sault Star (Nov. 26, 2004) entitled **Wind farm turbines set to turn within year** stated that Superior Wind Energy has been granted two contracts to supply the provincial electricity grid with 150 megawatts of wind energy, the outcome Steve Kent and David Stephenson had hoped for when they gave their presentation last October. The Prince Township site (Gros Cap) will supply 100 MW and should be functioning by Dec. 2005. Road construction in Prince is to begin in Dec. 2004; turbines, in late August, 2005.

In the last election, the present Ontario Government pledged to replace coal-fired electricity generating plants as part of a clean air plan. Approximately 1300 MW of renewable energy is promised by 2007 for the grid, and double that amount by 2010. Landfill gas (methane) and small hydroelectric projects are other renewable energy projects awarded contracts.

Betty Bennett

Tree Riddles for Don

How can you tell if a tree is a dogwood? -
By its bark!

Why did the tree not want to play checkers?
Because it was a chess-nut!

What do you call a tree with fingers?
A palm tree!

Potpourri is continued on page 7.

Winter and Spring Outings

Saturday, Dec. 18. Christmas Bird Count.

For those wishing to participate, call Chris Sanders in advance to be assigned an area within the seven-mile count radius. Leader: Chris Sanders (705) 759-6216.

Sunday, Jan. 2, 10:00 a.m. MWC. Have a post-holiday workout, skiing on an ungroomed North Country Trail west of Brimley. Duration of the ski is up to the participants. Leaders: Chuck Bosley (906) 248-3287 and Ev Simon (705) 949-8206.

Saturday, Jan. 15, 10:00 a.m. Market Mall. Ron will lead us on a bushwhack ski in one of his early-winter ski areas. Leader: Ron Prickett (705) 254-1533.

Sunday, Jan. 23, 9:00 a.m. MWC. Join John for a ski outing in the Cedarville area. Leader: John Lehman (906) 635-5095.

Saturday, Jan 29, 10:00 a.m. Wellington Sq. Mall. Ski or snowshoe in the Desbarats area. Leader: Val Walker (705) 253-7044.

Saturday, Feb. 5, 10:00 a.m. Zellers' Plaza North. Ski with Horst to "his canyon" (off Peoples Road.) Great scenery, with our lunch eaten beside a fire. Leader: Horst Wetzl. Call either Chuck (906) 248-3287 or Ev (705) 949-8206 to register.

Saturday, Feb. 12, 1:00 p.m. Meet at Sault College J parking lot (off Northern Ave. at east end of college, near Pine St.).
Identification of Deciduous Trees in Winter. Part 2. Don will follow the same format that was so well received in Nov.- a workshop at the college, including a review of what was covered earlier, followed by a slo-o-w ski or snowshoe on the woodlot trails across from the college to test our newly acquired tree IDing skills. Dress appropriately for the outdoors. New

participants are welcome. Calling ahead is essential. Leader: Don Hall (705) 248-1834.

Saturday, Feb. 19, 10:00 a.m. Zellers' Plaza North. Ski or snowshoe with Jim around the Red Rock area. Leader: Jim Miller. (705) 254-7494.

Saturday, March 5, 10:00 a.m. Zellers' Plaza North. Ski on one of the many trails Horst has made through his woods. Moderate difficulty, with some hills, for a good workout. Leader: Horst Wetzl. Call either Chuck (906) 248-3287 or Ev (705) 949-8206 to register.

Saturday, March 19, 9:00 a.m. MWC. Snowshoe or ski the Tahquamenon area. A long drive but worth the time. Leader: Roger Blanchard (906) 253-9316.



Saturday, April 23. Whitefish Point Bird Observatory. Meet at the point for the Audubon Annual Whitefish Point bird migration. Bird banding should start at the Information Station after daylight. Meet at the Information Station at noon to decide a group lunch location. Leader: Tony Walker (705) 759-6151.

Saturday, April 30, 12:00 noon. Wellington Sq. Mall. Join Dave Euler and Gail Giuliani at their woodlot east of the Sault to explore old growth forest. There will be a forester (and perhaps a logger) to discuss good versus poorly managed tree harvesting. Afterwards, the group is invited to partake of chili and refreshments at the cabin on their property (around 5:00 or 6:00 p.m.). Leaders: Dave and Gail (705) 248-1494.

For those wishing to play in the snow, when no outings are scheduled, call:

Val	(705) 253-7044
Chuck	(906) 248-3287
Ev	(705) 949-8206
Carl	(906) 635-9891
Ron	(705) 254-1533
Betty	(906) 248-5451

Annual Dinner and General Meeting

When: Tuesday, February 8, 2005. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.; program should begin at approximately 7:45 p.m. There may be a short wait before dinner while the tables are prepared.

Where: Cafeteria, Sault College, 443 Northern Avenue, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario.

Menu: Buffet dinner with choice of oven-roasted chicken or baked lasagna (including vegetarian option) plus salads, sides, and choice of dessert.

Cost: \$20 Canadian or \$16 U.S.

Directions: If you're coming from the U.S., turn left onto Huron after leaving the International Bridge Plaza and immediately right on Albert. After Albert makes a sharp curve to the left and merges with Wellington, follow the signs for Highway 17 North and turn left on Church St (just beyond Pim). Continue on Highway 17 North to the traffic light at Northern Avenue, turn right, drive about 2 blocks to the Sault College campus, and turn right into the parking lot. Enter the main building, take the stairs to the ground floor, and follow the main corridor to the cafeteria, which will be on your right. Handicapped access is available.

Speaker: Internationally renowned ecologist, author and speaker Stephanie Mills will speak about "Preserving the environment and living in harmony with the natural world." See the list of programs for more information.

Please note: The deadline for ticket sales is Thursday, February 3. All tickets must be prepaid; none will be available at the door.

For tickets, please contact:

Jean Cowen (705) 254-3643

Dieter Ropke (705) 942-9636 (will deliver)

Mary Ryckman (705) 253-6352

Carl Linhart (906) 635-9891

John Lehman (906) 635-5095

Potpourri - Continued

Point Pelee Birding - 2005

Each May, club members are privileged to spend a few days tenting and birding at Point Pelee National Park, a North American birding hotspot. The wonderful thing about camping on the point is that we are surrounded by birds – 24 hours a day. The songbird migration is really incredible, and some of the birders are every bit as entertaining as the birds.

Only organized clubs are allowed to camp in the park, and only for a short time each year. There is no public "campground" of the sort that people expect to find in a national park.

Making reservations is a difficult and uncertain process. It involves a "telephone marathon" on the first business day in January. For 2005 we hope to arrive on the point on May 8 or May 9, and stay for three nights. If other clubs are ahead of us in the marathon we may have to change our arrival date (up to seven days in either direction) or even cancel the trip altogether.

Camping fees last year were \$28 per person; they may be up slightly in 2005. Our club is limited to 20 campers, and the spots may fill up quickly.

Assuming we are successful with the reservations, we need to have a good idea of how many people will be in the group. If you are interested, please contact us before Christmas, and we'll fill you in on all the details.

Hope to see you on the point!

Don and Vivian Hall

Phone (705) 248-1834

Email: don.hall2@sympatico.ca

The Sault Naturalists Website

<http://www3.sympatico.ca/don.hall2/>

Our website, maintained by Don Hall, is an excellent source of information and is a supplement to the Wake-Robin. All "wired" members can have a peek from time to time to check for changes to outings and program schedules as well as announcements, interesting links, nature pics, a listing of the club executive and much more.

Digital Newsletter Address

Several e-mail addresses provided on your membership forms were ambiguous, leading to returned digital newsletters. If you have requested a Wake-Robin in pdf format but have yet to receive one, it may be because we have an incorrect e-mail address. A quick e-mail to the editors will fix the problem. Ditto if you have changed your e-mail address.

Digital Newsletter Again

At this time about one third of our membership has Internet access. We now have opportunity to significantly reduce our distribution costs as more members receive their Wake-Robin on-line. Future digital (pdf) distributions of the Wake-Robin will be in color for your additional reading pleasure. If you would like to forsake your paper copy for a full color version please let us know at: bengerbet@shaw.ca.

Use what talent you possess. The woods would be very silent if no birds sang except those that sing best.

Henry Van Dyke

Great Gray Owls

In mid-November, local radio and TV, stations received many reports from area birders of large numbers of Great Gray Owls along Highway 17 between Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury. A naturalist from Massey saw 17 Great Grays along Highway 17 between Iron Bridge and Massey on Nov. 11 and seven along Dean Lake Road near Iron Bridge the next day. He termed the sightings an irruption- "a sudden large movement of individuals into an area where they are generally uncommon, often on an unpredictable basis" (Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior", 2001). On Nov.14, Bob and Joanne Knudsen found one Great Gray Owl along Echo River Road in Echo Bay and one at the north end of Lakeview Road. According to Sibley, the winter movement of owls in large numbers to areas south of their normal winter range occurs every few years and is thought to be related to shortage of prey farther north, either through lower numbers and/or climatic conditions.



Betty Bennett

Ontario Nature's Membership Special- Give the Gift that Gives Back to Nature

Ontario Nature (FON) has a special offer for Nature Network member clubs (us) to obtain their group membership in Ontario Nature free of charge for a year. How? - By selling individual Ontario Nature memberships. For clubs with a membership enrolment between 100 and 200 members (like ours), we would have to sell eight individual memberships to get a free group membership. Some of the services Ontario Nature offers member clubs include free publications, four editions per year of the "award-winning" magazine **Ontario Nature**, regional meetings, regional staff, and support services.

Special discounted rates for new members are being offered until Jan.15, 2005. They are as follows:

Individual: \$40.00 -Save \$5.00
 Student or Senior: \$35.00 -Save \$3.00
 School/Library: \$35.00-Save \$5.00
 Family: \$45.00- Save \$5.00

If you are interested in this offer, please contact Tony Walker, our club's Ontario Nature rep., at (705) 759-6151 for an application form. All forms must be submitted with payment to Ontario Nature by Jan. 15, 2005.

Winter Birding Festival Winging to the Sault

The second annual **Winter Birding Festival** will take place in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan the weekend of February 18 – 20, 2005. On the agenda for the festival are field trips to local spots to view a variety of winter species, a dinner and a presentation by Joe Rogers of the Wildlife Recovery Association featuring live birds of prey.

For more information on registering for the festival, contact the Sault Area Chamber of Commerce at (906) 632-3301 or visit their web site at: www.saultstemarie.org and click on **Chamber News**. This festival is sponsored by the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Lake Superior State University, the Sault Naturalists of Ontario and Michigan, the Barbeau Birder and the Sault Area Chamber of Commerce.

Environmental Action

Environmental Summit at LSSU

The Binational Public Advisory Council (BPAC) will host the second of three workshops on the cleanup of contaminated sediments in the St. Mary's River on February 10, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. in the Cisler Center, Lake Superior State University. The workshop is designed to provide citizen input to the agencies responsible for the sediment cleanup. BPAC would like many citizens from both sides of the border to be involved in the decision-making process.

At the first workshop, which was part of the Environmental Summit on November 4, 2004, a representative from Conestoga-Rover & Associates had a display on their proposal to remove heavy metal impacted sediments identified within Tannery Bay. By dredging, dewatering and offsite disposal of sediments, their proposal aimed to facilitate site redevelopment and/or habitat restoration. In addition, a representative of the Friends of the St. Mary's River had information on a proposal to contain and cap contaminated sediments near Bellevue Park in Canada. Both proposals would impact the shoreline and possibly provide more park area, trails, etc. Perhaps the Sault Naturalists could provide some input on retaining or planting native species or creating birding areas. Whatever is done to clean up the sediment would have some environmental impact, so you knowledgeable members should get involved.

BPAC'S website is: www.lssu.edu/bpac
Questions and concerns may be expressed on BPAC's message board.

Katie Bosket

(Katie Bosket is the new chairperson of the Environmental Action Committee.)

Christmas Bird Count

Saturday Dec 18, 2004

Participants from last year's Christmas Bird Count will be contacted for this year's count. If you did not participate last year, but would like to join in, please contact Chris Sanders, either at 759-6216 or e-mail: csanders@nrcan.gc.ca.



Northern Ontario Plant Database Website

Congratulations to Sue Meades and her Algoma University team, a lead partner in a collaborative effort to establish the Northern Ontario Plant Database Website. The site provides "free access" to information on northern Ontario vascular plant specimens in herbaria at several universities and colleges, research institutions, the Royal Ontario Museum and other places. Visit the website at www.northernontarioflora.ca to learn more about the project and to "link to descriptions and photographs of many species of our northern flora".

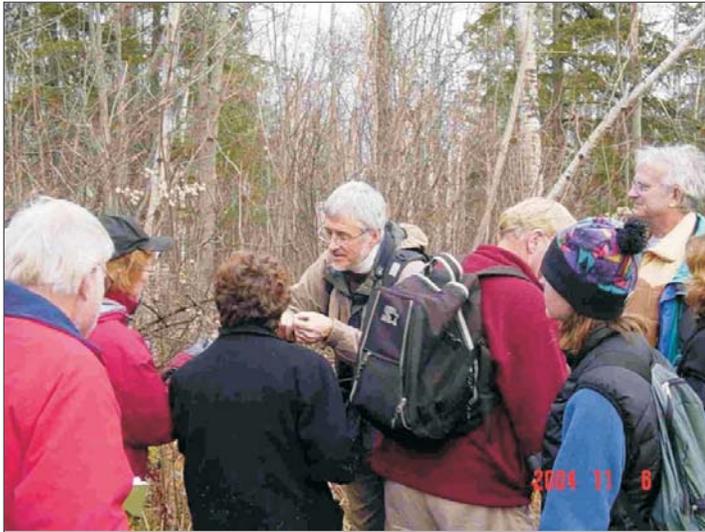
Sue and her students at Algoma University were featured recently on the TV Ontario program **Studio Two**. Sue explained the need to have a reference database of northern Ontario vascular plants so that any changes in plant distribution, as related to climate change or other factors, can be recognized.

Betty Bennett

Outing Report

Identification of Deciduous Trees in Winter

On November 06, 2004, Don Hall hosted a workshop and outing on winter identification of northern Ontario trees and shrubs at Sault College. Besides a useful handout and CD-ROM, our host was even considerate



enough to provide fair weather and sunshine. We ten participants chuckled over memory phrases such as “wear stripes while you’re serving time” to aid in remembering that serviceberry has striped bark and “sharp sugar, brown sugar” to help in remembering that sugar maple twigs have end buds sharp to the touch and are brown. After the laboratory portion, we tested our newfound knowledge on a walk through the woods across the highway from the college. A hearty thank you is extended to Don for an enjoyable and educational afternoon.

Carl Linhart

“The Tragedy in life is not what men suffer, but what they miss.”

Thomas Carlyle

Outing Guidelines

- **Please register for all outings** by calling the trip leader or an outing committee member. Phone numbers are listed in the outing schedule. Non-registrants are welcome but risk being uninformed of last minute outing changes.
- Please keep in mind that leaders are volunteers giving freely of their time and expertise.
- Dress for the weather and terrain with appropriate clothing and footwear. Be prepared for sudden weather changes (Depending on the season bring rain gear or extra warm clothing.) Bring snacks, water, binoculars, loupes, field guides, etc. For daylong excursions, bring a lunch, and extra water.
- Take only photographs; leave only footprints. Leave pets at home. Take out all garbage. Limited collecting of non-endangered and non-threatened plant specimens for further study may be allowed with permission of the leader, but in general no picking.
- Refer all questions and requests for transportation to the trip leader or a member of the outing committee.
- If carpooling, consider assisting the driver with gas costs. Suggested amounts are \$U.S. 2.00 and \$Can. 3.00 and up depending on the length of the trip.
- Participants in outings do so at their own risk.