



Photo by: Laura Mousseau

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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**RICE LAKE PLAINS BUTTERFLY COUNT**

**Date:** SUN. JULY 10 Come spend a day with us and tap into your inner Lepidopterist! Enjoy an après count BBQ!  
**Location:** Various inner Black Oak Savanna. Meet at Alderville Black Oak Savanna.  
locations, RLP

**BAT NIGHT**

**Date:** THURS. JULY 28 Come learn about Ontario's bats! The Alderville Black Oak Savanna is home to at least 7 species of bats. Please register at 905.352.1008.

**PRAIRIE DAY**

**Date:** SAT. SEPT. 10 Not to be missed! This festival includes nature workshops, yoga, sunrise ceremony, food, kids' entertainment, art, guided tours, music, and more! Look for performances by Digging Roots, the Barnburners, and the Paddling Puppeteers! Full schedule online at [www.ricelakeplains.ca](http://www.ricelakeplains.ca).

**2011 Rice Lake Plains Butterfly Count**

On Sunday, July 10th, 2011, local nature enthusiasts and butterfly experts will team up, with binoculars and nets ready, and count and identify the butterflies of the Rice Lake Plains. Butterfly counts are an excellent way to assess the diversity of insect populations in the Rice Lake Plains and can be a great indicator of habitat quality. Participants will fan out over the Rice Lake Plains looking for butterflies and then enjoy a free barbeque to share their discoveries and experience. It is a great way to spend a day exploring habitats and recording butterflies.

If you know your butterflies or would like to take advantage of this opportunity to meet other naturalists and get some hands-on field experience please register for the butterfly count by contacting Brooke Stevens, the outreach coordinator for the Rice Lake Plains Joint Initiative at: [outreach@ricelakeplains.ca](mailto:outreach@ricelakeplains.ca) or 905-352-1184.

Danielle Montgomery

## NORTHUMBERLAND'S HISTORIC FLORA

"It can hardly be imagined what a relief it is to the eye, after travelling for miles through a dense forest, to see such a beautiful landscape...flowery knolls, deep ravines and oak crowned hills." Samuel Strickland, 1853

Most of the time, our heritage sites are recognized by monuments or a grand piece of architecture. In Northumberland, our heritage has also been found in a different form - prairie wildflowers. Early pioneers such as Catharine Parr Traill and her brother Samuel Strickland kept records of these species and left us descriptions of what once was.

Canada's most famous field botanist, John Macoun, began his career, as a teacher in Castleton, and spent most of the summer of 1860 exploring the local plains and recording his findings. He noted that the lupine, now rarely seen, was common in the Castleton area. Later he was to go west to explore the southern prairies where he greatly encouraged their agricultural potential. In 1882, he was appointed to the Geographical Survey of Canada, and, with his abundant collection of new plants, the Dominion Herbarium was founded. The same year the Museum of Nature was incorporated in Ottawa, with Macoun as its first biologist. Macoun also authored the first catalogue of Canadian Plants as well as the first Catalogue of Canadian Birds.



Back row: Big Bluestem, Indian Grass, Lupine Front row: Blue-eyed Grass, Butterfly Weed, Prairie Buttercup, Blazing Star and Wood Lily.

Although the great Rice Lake Plains of Macoun and Traill have been lost due to agricultural cultivation, small pockets, such as can be found in abandoned cemeteries like Red Cloud or Russ' Creek, have escaped the plough. Prairies are also being nurtured at Alderville First Nation and other Rice Lake Plains Joint Initiative sites. Local Stewardship Councils have recommended that these places be treated with respect for they hold irreplaceable genetic material, such as their unique ability to withstand drought. More than bricks and mortar, Northumberland's and Canada's heritage can also be found in its tallgrass and flowers.

### Barry King

### PRAIRIE DAY 2011: SCHEDULE SNEAK PEAK!

Bring the whole family for a full day of eco fun!

#### Sunrise Ceremony

7:30 am **Yoga on the Plains**

9:00 am **Opening Ceremony with the Sugar Island Singers**

10:00 am **Bus Tour to Barr Property and Gallery by the Grove**

10:00 am **Wild Edible and Medicinal Plants** with Tina Cole

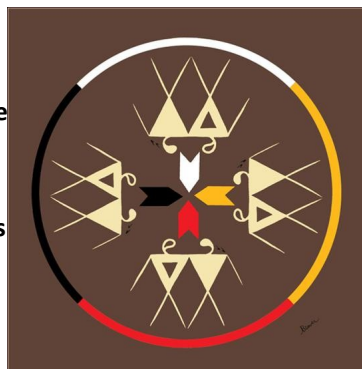
11:00 am **Nature Photography** with Allison Clark

12:00 pm **Tallgrass Prairie Restoration in the Rice Lake Plains**  
with Kristina Hubert, Ken Towle, Janine McLeod

1:00 pm **Butterfly Bliss**

2:00 pm **The Barnburners**

3:00 pm **Digging Roots**



plus on-going bird banding, food, traditional skills, exhibits, a brand new puppet show by the Padding Puppeteers, kids' crafts and entertainment, and a special art display featuring the work of Rick Beaver in collaboration with the Northumberland Hills Studio Tour

Rain or Shine!



Headliner Band: Digging Roots



The Padding Puppeteers

## THE NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS STUDIO TOUR: A TRADITION 16 YEARS STRONG PARTNERS WITH PRAIRIE DAY 2011

The 16<sup>th</sup> annual Northumberland Hills Studio Tour takes place on the weekend of September 10 and 11. Between 10 am and 5 pm each day more than 40 artists, showing at 33 studios, will open their doors inviting visitors to discover their work and the places where they live and create.

In the heritage towns of Port Hope and Cobourg and across the countryside of western Northumberland County, our artists represent a diverse and accomplished range of art and fine craft. From potters, painters and photographers to a blacksmith, cabinetmaker, jewelers and several glass and fibre artists, we also cast a fresh eye on traditional crafts with a self-styled eco artisan and a passionate soapmaker.

This year also marks a first-time collaboration with Prairie Day to help celebrate the rich ecological heritage of our Rice Lake neighbours on the Alderville First Nation. In fact, noted artist and biologist Rick Beaver, a founding member of the studio tour and, more recently, of Prairie Day, is participating in both events through a show and sale of his work at the Alderville Black Oak Savanna Ecology Centre. Long-time studio tour member Barry King is also featured in both events; his rural property shares the same tallgrass prairie landscape the Savanna Ecology Centre works to promote and protect. Barry's land has been in his family for over a century and flourished undisturbed for generations. His art, in watercolours, pen and inks, and widely-published prints, reflects Barry's deep connection to this area, its wildflowers, countryside and historic architecture.

Prairie Day events unfold on Saturday September 10 but Rick will be on hand with his work both days and the interpretive centre will remain open on Sunday. Barry's property will be featured as a stop on Prairie Day's Saturday morning bus tour and his studio will be open throughout the weekend as part of the Northumberland Hills Studio Tour. Come out to visit us and see how art and nature intersect for these two artists and for many others who call Northumberland home.



Barry King displaying his art at Gallery by the Grove



"There is Light in All Things" - Original Painting by Rick Beaver

For more information and a complete list of artist studios, please visit [www.northumberlandstudiotour.com](http://www.northumberlandstudiotour.com) or [www.alderillesavanna.ca](http://www.alderillesavanna.ca).

### Maya Sheaves



## ARTHROPODS IN THE RICE LAKE PLAINS

The state of scientific knowledge for arthropods- of which insects constitute the largest group - is very poor compared to other animals, and yet they constitute over 80% of all animal species.

There are approximately 30,000 insect species known to occur in Canada, and experts estimate that almost that many have yet to be identified. From a conservation perspective, this represents a sizeable gap in our knowledge of native biodiversity and in our understanding of ecosystems. By gaining information about Ontario's Arthropods we can make better decisions about where and how to focus conservation efforts.

Therefore building on arthropods surveys complete in 2010 by the University of Guelph, on Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) properties on Manitoulin Island, surveys will take place on NCC and Ministry of Natural Resources properties in the Norfolk region and within the Rice Lake Plains. Two NCC properties and two sites within Peter's Woods Provincial Nature Reserve will be surveyed. The primary objective of these surveys is to identify a significant proportion of the arthropod taxa present at selected sites, with an emphasis on discovery and documentation of species of conservation concern, potentially invasive species, or previously unrecorded taxa. Fundraising and planning for future surveys at sites across Ontario are taking place.



Setting Malaise trap on a early summer day

Various collecting methods will be used including pan traps, sweeping, litter sifting, funnel traps, malaise traps(see photo) and evening surveys using lights for night active arthropods. The University of Guelph will be identifying the collected specimens and labeled specimens will be deposited at the University where they will be available for future study. The University of Guelph insect lab has over 2.5 million specimens, the second most comprehensive collection in the country after Agriculture Canada's.

### Todd Farrell



Black Purse Web Spider

#### Did you know...

Purse Web spiders are shiny black spiders, medium in size with an over-sized chelicerae. They have 8 sprawling legs and two body parts. They are hatched from eggs and travel long distances in search of females once grown. Instead of weaving a web, they knit a tight and upright silken tube. They feed on insects and small spiders. Although there are very few of these critters in Ontario, a couple of them have been sighted at the Alderville Black Oak Savanna!



Left: Malaise trap for surveying Arthropods

Right: RLPJI and University of Guelph search for Arthropods on NCC property



## PARTNER PROFILE: LOWER TRENT CONSERVATION

In response to requests from local communities, Lower Trent Conservation was formed in 1968 under the [Conservation Authorities Act](#) to protect, restore and manage water and other natural resources within the Lower Trent watershed region.



Hiking at Goodrich-Loomis CA

We are accountable to the residents of the watershed through our Board of Directors appointed by the elected councils of the seven municipalities located either entirely, or partially, within the watershed region. This accountability, combined

Parks and open spaces are essential requirements of a healthy community. Over 3,800 acres of natural open space are held in public trust by Lower Trent Conservation (LTC). These forests, valleys, meadows and wetlands form part of a regional system of protected landscapes that depict the natural diversity of the region. They are special places in the watershed that are protected from development, where the natural world comes first.

Lower Trent Conservation (LTC) delivers conservation services to protect and manage our local environment on a watershed basis. We seek opportunities to establish partnerships with other agencies, watershed residents and community groups to do restoration projects. LTC is one of the original members of the RLPJI and houses the landowner contact specialist working on behalf of the partners. LTC owns two Natural Habitat Areas (Alderville Woods and Burnley Creek) and one Conservation Area (Goodrich-Loomis) within the Rice Lake Plains.



Interpretive Hike at the Alderville Woods

## MEASURING SUCCESS ON THE OAK RIDGES MORAINÉ

The Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation commissioned, and is now proud to have published, the *Measuring Success on the Oak Ridges Moraine* reports. Two years in the making, the eight-volume study documents where we are with the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan on the Moraine—successes, shortcomings, what’s working, what isn’t—and provides the government and other stakeholders with recommended actions and the data needed to plot a course that ensures its successful implementation and realization.

Together, the reports measure “success” on the Moraine in three different but essential dimensions:

1. Condition of the Moraine environment, from a watershed perspective and also in terms of plants, animals and ecology.
2. Rate of progress on implementation of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan at municipal and provincial levels and among area stakeholders.
3. Extent of the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation’s achievements in its five core focus areas (land stewardship, land securement, education, research and trail improvement/development).

With a full review of the Conservation Plan due in just four years, this is the first time this type of data has been gathered and analyzed. On the environmental front, this means many of the results compiled for *Measuring Success* are original, baseline information. Without this information it would be impossible to measure the Plan’s effectiveness in protecting and enhancing the Moraine’s ecological and hydrological health through time.

Overall, the eight reports tell a story of a Moraine that is holding its own in terms of its environmental health, particularly with respect to its base of natural vegetation and cover. However, the reports do reveal some area of serious concern. Only one-third of all stream corridors on the Moraine meet the ecological target of 75% natural vegetation coverage, for example. Rare prairie grassland and savannah habitats, present in small quantities on the Moraine in areas like the Rice Lake Plains, are also under constant threat as is habitat for interior forest species and species-at-risk.

The Moraine is 90% privately owned. In order for the Plan to meet its objectives, the involvement of private landowners and stakeholders is necessary. The *Measuring Success* reports conclude that there is a need for both regulatory and a non-regulatory (activities like land stewardship, land securement, public education and research) approaches in order to ensure the Oak Ridges Moraine is restored and protected for generations to come. To review the *Measuring Success* reports in detail visit: [www.ormf.com](http://www.ormf.com).

**RETURN ADDRESS:**

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The **Savanna Sentinel** is a publication of the Rice Lake Plains Joint Initiative— dedicated to the identification, protection and stewardship of the best remaining tallgrass prairie and black oak savanna within the Rice Lake Plains.

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**KINNINCKINICK: THAT WHICH IS MIXED**

Bearberry, or kinnickinnick, is a trailing, evergreen shrub of heather family. Flexible, rooting branches grow up to 2 m long, are covered with reddish, shreddy bark and bear alternate, dark green, oval leaves. Small, waxy, urn-shaped flowers are white or pink, tipped with red. They grow in small clusters at branch ends, in late spring and early summer, and develop into bright red, fleshy fruits. The genus name, *Arctostaphylos*, derives from Greek *arc-tos*, "bear," *staphylos*, "bunch of grapes"; species name, *uva-ursi*, from Latin *uva*, "bunch of grapes," *ursus*, "bear" - literally "bearberry, berry-bear."



Bearberry grows across Canada on dry, sandy soils

Bearberry grows across Canada on dry sandy soils (often called sandberry), but is also found on gravel terraces, sand dunes and in the boreal forest, and is valuable as ground cover for checking erosion on watersheds. It is less common above the treeline. Kinnickinnick (Algonquian, "that which is mixed") leaves were combined with tobacco and smoked by native groups in religious ceremonies.

Bearberry extract has a high content of tannic and gallic acids which make it an astringent. It also contains arbutin, which becomes a germicide in the renal tract. This valuable plant has also been used for kidney diseases and made an infusion for sore gums, and a salve for skin diseases.

**Brooke Stevens**

**THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING SPONSERS**



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