



President's Report

What is the TBFN? To most of us it's outdoor hikes and indoor presentations, both given by knowledgeable people. It is a social grouping of like-minded individuals dedicated to setting aside natural landscapes for future generations. And it all seems to run quite smoothly just the way it is.

However, a couple of recent events gave me pause for reflection. Not only "What is the TBFN?" but "What might the TBFN become?"

The first event occurred in October when I had the privilege of attending the annual gathering of the Ontario Land Trust Alliance on behalf of the club. It was a very educational and inspiring event for me. There were representatives from 27 land trusts and land conservation organizations present. Keep in mind that most of those 27 land trusts are based in southern Ontario and operate under very different circumstances than the TBFN. During the day and a half of presentations I was immersed in talks, discussions and conversations that challenged my comfortable view of how our club operates. Topics such as the legality of different kinds of land acquisition and land holding and what financial backers of land acquisition might look for in the future before contributing money, gave glimpses as to what might lie ahead for the TBFN.

The second event was a phone call from Canada Revenue Agency announcing a comprehensive audit of the TBFN. I was told that we had been randomly selected. As this is being written the audit has yet to occur but thanks to people like Sue Bryan and Karolyn Hoard and the people who handle our financial and legal affairs I feel confident that we will be fine. I hope to be able to report on the audit at the November general meeting (Monday, 27 November).

This reveals a side of the club that many don't give a second thought to and that is, "How is the club run within the laws that govern an incorporated, not for profit, charitable group?" It seems that within the not-too-distant future the club, guided by the Board of Directors, may have to become more bureaucratic. That may mean we might have to become accredited—an accreditation that individuals, contributing foundations and government departments will look for before writing a cheque. The accreditation process means successful adherence to a proscribed set of standards and practices that are drawn up by a national organization and by whom the club would be measured for its adherence to them.

It may also mean a closer look at the legal requirements that govern our existence and actions—legal requirements that

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Nature Northwest is a quarterly publication of the Thunder Bay Field Naturalists. Each volume (ISSN 0836-4702) consists of four issues published in February, May, August and November. A subscription to *Nature Northwest* is a benefit of membership.

Articles, notes, records, illustrations and photographs of local and regional natural history are welcome. Material accepted is subject to editing and revision. *Nature Northwest* is intended to be informative and thought-provoking. Articles may be edited and reviewed by different members of the TBFN Newsletter Committee. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Thunder Bay Field Naturalists or the Editor.

Send events, stories, trip reviews, articles, pictures and observations. Your ideas and suggestions are welcome. Address all submissions to:

S.emese.boyko@gmail.com

Deadline for submissions is the first day of the month in which the issue will be produced.

Contributors:

Connie Hartviksen
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From the Editor’s Desk...

Our changing climate has endless ramifications, and this year’s fires, hurricanes, and earthquakes left many of us distraught. The political climate to the south is equally dismaying, and I find respite from global worries by casting my gaze on sights closer to home.

As fall gives way to winter, it’s tempting to retreat indoors and curl up by the fire. Doing so would deprive me of the joys and secret wonders winter offers, however, so I drag myself outside on all but the coldest days. Our intrepid field naturalists have been mucking it out, too, and presented here are this quarter’s photos and essays for your enjoyment.

There are some promising lectures and field trips coming up, and I hope readers will make it out—and bring friends and family! What could be a better Boxing Day tradition than birding?

Happy reading, and happy holidays.

- Emese Boyko

can change with each change in government whether provincial or federal.

Will that change the fabric of our club? That is anybody's guess. I hope we will continue to meet as a sociable group of like-minded individuals intent on learning about and experiencing nature and setting aside wild lands for preservation. I don't want to see us become "bureaucratic" for the simple reason of following unnecessary rules. But what do you, a club member, think? What does the club mean for you? What would you like the club to look like in five or ten years and how might it get there while retaining our current "nature"? Let any of the Board of Directors know your thoughts either in person or by clicking the "Contact Us" icon at the top right corner of our homepage.

The Board of Directors wishes everyone all the best in the coming holiday season and for the New Year.

-Bruce Thacker

Field Trip Report: Tree Farm

On Saturday, October 7, a tour led by Mac Squires looked at harvested areas along Highway 527 north of Thunder Bay.

Despite a dismal forecast the tour experienced reasonable fall weather, except at the two most northerly planned locations. They were cancelled because dense fog limited visibility and safety. Later stops included:

- A 1985 clear-cut area that had been regenerated with jack pine seeds that were placed beneath plastic cones
- A 1987 plantation of one-year-old black spruce in paper-pot containers
- A 1987 plantation of two-year-old black spruce in paper-pot containers,
- A 1960s clear-cut that had been scarified to encourage natural regeneration and/or seeded with jack pine
- A 1960's first-cut and 1970's second-cut alternated-strip-cut area
- A 2014 clear-cut on shallow to no soil over bedrock that was fill-in planted with black spruce
- A 1980's clear-cut that had been planted with black spruce and some red pine container stock.
-

At each stop the thinking behind, and results of each treatment were discussed:

- Seeding beneath plastic cones didn't become common practice because use of machinery that injected seed as it scarified the ground proved more successful and cheaper
- Although planting black spruce seedlings in the paperpots that they were grown in was successful other container systems that proved much more manageable in greenhouses were later adopted, and are just as successful when planted
- Where there is a jack pine seed source scarifying clear-cuts to encourage and/or broadcasting seed to enhance regeneration is quite successful, and results in a natural looking new stand
- Alternate-strip cuts have variable regeneration success, especially after the leave strips are cut. Planting of both cuts is sometimes necessary to achieve a fully stocked stand of desired species
- None of the viewed plantations are now the much feared plantation monocultures. Mac confessed to trying to create monocultures such as those that often naturally follow wildfire, but was never successful as the soil preparation for planting and naturally available seeds of other tree species inevitably resulted in stands of mixed species.

-Mac Squires

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Photos by Mac Squires.



Top: The jack pine photo was taken in May, 2016 near Bilkey Lake in the 1980 TB 46 burn. It is of a natural pure stand of jack pine that is a common feature of that burn which covers in excess of 1,000 square kilometers.

Bottom: photo of Sb Mono 110 was taken in May 2016 near the junction of the Dorion cut-off and Manchester Roads, and depicts the remnants of a much larger pure black spruce stand that regenerated after a fire in approximately 1907. Notice that a dense understory of balsam fir is invading the stand and, in my experience, this forecasts a gradual conversion to a natural pure balsam fir stand. Black spruce is not regenerating because a relatively thick mat of feather moss and undecomposed organics is preventing their seedlings' fine roots from reaching consistently adequate moisture. As wind eventually pushes the mature spruces over, their flat root mats will lift and expose the bare mineral soil. As the mature spruces fall the released fir will experience a burst of growth quickly creating a closed canopy and dense shade on the forest floor. Some spruce will successfully regenerate and survive on the newly-exposed mineral soil, but most will remain as understory. There they may remain with thin foliage and be consumed with the fir by the next fire, or have most of their thin foliage removed in the next spruce budworm epidemic. A few may survive the budworm to form a minor portion of the next near-pure fir stand.





While this plant was not readily recognized on our forestry trip with Max Squires, it turned out to be *Aralia hispida* or bristly sarsaparilla, a member of the Ginseng family. Our familiar counterpart, wild sarsaparilla or *Aralia nudicaulis*, is smaller, has a smooth stem, rather than a bristly one, and has its 3 flowers on a separate stalk rather than on the stem. Both have been used in making root beer. Photo by Marian Childs.



Photo of leucistic dark-eyed Junco by Jan Luit.

Owl's House

Some believe humans have two hungers to satisfy if they are to survive. One is the need for nutrition; without food they will perish.

The other is the hunger for meaning. Humans will not thrive without meaning. This hunger is powerful and it supports the finest growth of human nature.

The need for meaning manifests in many ways. One mechanism for me is through Winnie-the-Pooh. Most of you know the story (not the Disney one). From it I learned that when Christopher Robin had important questions, serious questions, he sought out Owl who, as we all know, is the font of knowledge. Where best to find Owl but at Owl's house? Christopher's search of the hundred-acre-wood in his hunt for Owl is an inspiration for me. When the need is strong, I pack up and begin my own exploration for "Owl's House". In my search for meaning one of the most memorable events occurred in south-central Utah.

One year in the fall I stayed at a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) campground for nearly a month, taking day trips out and about the region. My stay was long enough that I became well acquainted with the camp hosts. One day the host told me about the "Cannon Camera Team" who set up shop there for several days apparently doing photographic studies for the company. They would routinely leave the campground before sunrise and return just before sunset. The team was secretive about its activities so he never knew what they were doing. One day when he was driving in the area the host recognized their van parked out on the open desert. The next day he found where they had parked and their boot tracks across the field. The ground gently sloped and eventually, by following sandstone shingles and stone steps, his path became trapped between steep cliffs on both sides. Shortly, it stopped in what is called a plunge pool, then continued again on down the canyon. That night the host asked me if I would like to explore with him. I agreed without hesitation..

In the morning we followed the path he had discovered to the plunge pool. Rainwater coming off the ledge had eroded a deep pit that was filled with disgusting looking water. We could jump from the ledge to the other side but getting back might be problematic (the canyon walls had become vertically high cliffs impossible to climb without difficulty). We anchored a rope and tossed the other end across the pool then we jumped across.

The host and I resumed our hike as the canyon deepened and narrowed more. Abruptly, the trail ended at the lip of the ledge that fell several hundred feet to a dry rock pile. In front of us lay a gigantic canyon surrounded by bluffs and mesas with several streams and rivers braiding together on the floor. To our left was a projection that traversed the face of the cliff and widened into a sort of portico. At the place where the ledge widened, three alcoves were arranged, one beside the other, then the trail ended. The ceiling of each alcove was covered with geometric pictographs.

My friend, who had been an appliance repairman in Denver before he and his wife became campground hosts and vagabonds, looked at me from his alcove and said he felt a kind of magic energy. So did I! This place clearly, it seemed to me, was a location for meditation, a place to experience a spirit quest. It was an ancient place - powerful and phenomenal, incomparable. It is one of very few places or moments in the world that focus understanding - meaning.

I doubt I will ever return to these caves. I cannot imagine telling anyone how to find them.

I continue to saunter about, pursuing my reconnaissance across the land looking for Owl's House. Northwestern Ontario is the perfect place, better than most.

-Dave Schnell

Elua – A Loyal TBFN Conservation Partner

Thunder Bay Field Naturalists Nature Reserves has once again received a generous donation from Elua, a Global Hydration company. You will recall that the company previously helped us to purchase the Terrace Bay Reserve (2015) and then the Granite Point Nature Reserve (2016). This year's donation helped us to acquire the Superior Islands Reserve.

Elua provides solutions for clean safe drinking water such as home water filtration systems, water purifiers and tablets, and water bottles for outdoor enthusiasts. The partnership between Elua and TBFN Nature Reserves is a natural one. Elua supports the right to clean drinking water around the world. It also promotes environmental protection through its membership in 1% for the Planet, a global movement of companies that donate 1% of their sales to approved environmental organizations such as TBFN. You can read more about Elua's corporate philosophy on their website: <http://elua.com/our-philosophy/#work>

Global Hydration is Elua's parent company. I found some interesting information on the Global Hydration website (www.globalhydration.com) about the company's role in recent climate change disasters and crises that we hear about in the media. The website has some great photos illustrating the importance of clean water solutions in everything from fire fighting to relief aid, to remote site services. The list of clients at the bottom of the page is quite impressive, many of them well-known international relief agencies and humanitarian groups. It is inspiring to think that a local Thunder Bay company provides help to people in trouble on a global scale.

Susan Bryan
TBFN Nature Reserves Chair.



Upcoming Field Trips

Living with Snow; How Animals Live in a Frozen World—Saturday, January 20, 2018

Join Gerry Racey for a winter hike at the Cedar Creek Conservation Reserve. We will snowshoe through different forest environments, examine snow conditions, identify animal tracks and develop an appreciation for how northern animals, birds and plants cope with the snow and the winter environment. Snowshoes are required. Bring a hearty lunch, water, and dress appropriately for the winter conditions considering level of physical exertion, wind and temperature. The hike will only proceed if daytime highs are forecast to be above -18°C. Please notify Gerry Racey (807-939-1620) gdracey@tbaytel.net of your intent to participate. Meet at the Movati Centre, form car pools, and depart at 10:00 am for the Conservation Reserve, approximately a 40 minute drive.

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Thunder Bay Christmas Bird Count , Dec. 26, 2017

As usual, our count will be held on Boxing Day, Dec 26. There are 14 areas in our count circle, and each area has a “team leader”. Bill Greaves will be compiling the count this year, and would like to hear from last year’s area leaders if they will be participating this year. We are pleased to report that Sue and Mike Bryan will once again host the pot-luck supper and “countdown”. Anyone interested in participating for the first time should contact Bill. He will assign you to a group, if you are not already assigned.

Feeder watchers are welcome and encouraged to participate. This year, Bill would like to expand the feeder watch program. Feeder watchers will be required to submit a checklist and the amount of effort (start time, end time, and total number of hours spent watching). The checklist is not additive, and instead is based on the most birds of each species seen at any one time. So if you saw 4 chickadees at one point in time and 6 at another, the total count for the day would be 6 chickadees, the highest count. Please, register with Bill Greaves ahead of time and advise how your checklist will be submitted. Checklists are due by 5 PM on Boxing Day. We will also need your feeder address so we can assign your list to the appropriate area.

Bill’s email is wfgreaves@gmail.com and phone number is [807-766-8231](tel:807-766-8231).

Snowshoe Hike at Brule Bay —Saturday, February 10, 2018

We will walk along the shoreline of Brule Bay, looking at ice formations, lichens and an open spring that provides fresh water for the birds and animals. The walk to the spring is suitable for children. Meet at the Movati Athletic Club at 9:30 am. Contact Marian Childs 577-1324 or marianchilds@shaw.ca

Rare find on the mushroom walk!!!

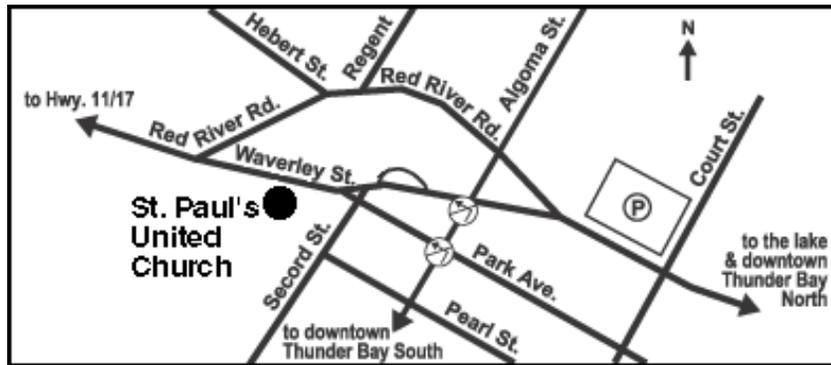


This solitary species of fungi was found along the trails near the old Psychiatric Hospital. Fairly round, it looked much like a regular puffball, until one examined the dimpled markings on top and the complete lack of any sort of stalk. The strange black markings at first glance suggested a rhizomorph, but it turned out there was no sign of attachment to any living thing on the ground or a tree. A unique find on any of our field trips, it will now go into the books as *Golphus palmatis*, unless there are serious objections and someone decides it is an erratic and belongs to a different category entirely.

- Anonymous.

UPCOMING GENERAL MEETINGS

The Thunder Bay Field Naturalists Club meets on the fourth Monday of September, October, November, January, March and April at Lunan Hall, St. Paul's United Church, 349 Waverley Street, Thunder Bay. Please note that meetings begin promptly at 7:00 p.m. so that we will finish early enough to have time to socialize after the presentation(s).



Conservation Authorities 101—Monday, November 27, 2017

Tammy Cook, Chief Administrative Officer of the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority will discuss the role of the Conservation Authority, its mandate, and what separates it from the mandates of government agencies such as the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, or the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change. She will share some of the challenges in moving towards their new strategic plan, talk about some of the special projects planned or underway, and identify how people can get involved. Tammy will also discuss the circumstances that make the Conservation Authority mission in the Lakehead a unique conservation challenge.

Annual General Meeting (Members' Slide Show)— Monday, January 22, 2018

Members are invited to share their favourite nature-related photographs from the past year. Each presenter is asked to limit their contribution to a maximum of 10 photographs or a maximum of 7 minutes. Please contact Gerry Racey (gdracey@tbaytel.net) by January 17 of your interest in presenting some slides and the general subject matter. Bring your photographs or presentation on a memory stick to have them loaded on the computer prior to the meeting. If your presentation requires special software you will have to bring your own computer (please notify Gerry Racey). Presenters should plan on arriving 15 minutes before the 7:00 meeting start time.

Annual Dinner—Sunday, February 25, 2018

Join us for dinner, socializing and a thought-provoking presentation at the Current River Community Centre. The TBFN Annual Dinner Meeting will be held at the Current River Community Centre on Sunday, February 25, 2018. Symposium 4:30 pm, Supper 5:45pm. There will be a cash bar. Tickets will be \$30.00 each and available at the November and January general meetings and on the TBFN website through PayPal. A Guest Speaker will follow the dinner. Tickets will not be available at the door and must be purchased in advance.

Thunder Bay Field Naturalists --- Information for 2017

The Thunder Bay Field Naturalists Club is a non-profit organization dedicated to the study of natural history, the wise use of resources, the preservation of natural areas, and teaching the public to understand and protect nature.

Mailing Address/Phone:

Thunder Bay Field Naturalists
P.O. Box 10037
Thunder Bay, ON P7B6T6

Website: www.tbfn.net

Meeting Dates:

4th Monday of September, October, November, January, March, and April, 7 p.m.
Annual Dinner meeting is held 4th Sunday of February

TBFN Board of Directors 2017 Contacts

| | | |
|---|--------------------|----------|
| President, Publicity, and Promotion | Bruce Thacker | 344-2279 |
| Vice President, Field Trips, Junior Naturalists | Marian Childs | 577-1324 |
| Secretary | Kathy Sakamoto | 577-1959 |
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| Programs | Gerry Racey | 939-1260 |
| Lake Superior NMCA Liason | Keith Wade | 935-3092 |

TBFN Standing Committees & Support

| | | |
|--|-------------------|----------|
| Newsletter Editor | Emese Boyko | 631-4011 |
| Web editor, Twitter Account | Bruce Thacker | 346-4950 |
| Facebook Page | Connie Hartviksen | 983-2688 |
| Thunder Cape Bird Observatory | Allan Gilbert | 768-8582 |
| Membership | Sharon Gilbert | |
| Junior Naturalists | Marian Childs | 577-1324 |
| Peregrine Falcon /Bird Records Committee Chair | Brian Ratcliff | 768-8408 |
| Bluebird Recovery Program | Susan Robinson | 344-1739 |
| Nature Reserves Committee Chair | Sue Bryan | 345-6446 |

TBFN Reps on Community Committees

| | | |
|---|---------------------|----------|
| EarthCare Community Greening Working Group | Kathy Sakamoto | 577-1959 |
| OMNRF LCC Spruce River Forest | Brian Moore | 344-2986 |
| OMNRF LCC Dog Lake/Mattawan River Forests | Connie Hartviksen | 983-2688 |
| OMNRF LCC Lakehead Forest | Gerry Stricker | 683-6696 |
| Lake Superior Public Advisory Committee to LaMPRemedial Action Plan | Jean Hall-Armstrong | 577-3997 |
| Thunder Bay Stewardship Council | Jean Hall-Armstrong | 577-3997 |
| OMNRF Fisheries Mgmt Zone 9 Advisory Council | Walter Momot | |
| Lake Superior National Marine Conservation Area IMAB | Keith Wade | 935-3092 |



Photo of Lapland longspur by Jan Luit.

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