

The Talon

Vol. 28, No.1, January 2018



NEWSLETTER

SOUTH LAKE SIMCOE NATURALISTS

SLSN is an incorporated not-for-profit Member of Ontario Nature.

Post Office Box 1044 Sutton West, Ontario, L0E 1R0

Telephone 905-722-8021

(www.slsnc.ca)

Research Partner with The Zephyr Society of Lake Simcoe (www.zephyrsociety.ca)

Member: Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition

Member: Ontario Greenbelt Alliance

Note: Please renew your membership to receive future Newsletters

Meetings and Outings

Meetings: All Meetings start at 7:30 p.m. at the York Region Police Building Meeting Room (Baseline Road between McCowan and Civic Centre Road) unless noted otherwise. No July or August Meetings. Members events (insurance compliance).

York Regional Police, 3 District Community Meeting Room
3527 Baseline Road, Georgina.



NOTE: Consistent with YRP recent procedures in place regarding evening use of their Community Meeting Room (CMR), attendees of SLSN meetings must be current members of SLSN in good standing, and may be asked to provide further information, as requested.

Tuesday, Feb. 13 Winter Birds in Ontario: A wide ranging conversation of winter birds in our area and beyond. Informed by the results of our Annual Sutton C.B.C. on Saturday January 30th this subject is an appropriate February subject in the depth of this cold, snowy winter. Club members research and presentation. **This is the club Annual Meeting, administration review and election of the coming year officers will be undertaken.**

Outing: All regular outings – Note: **Paid-up members may participate (for insurance compliance).**

2017 December

Sunday, Feb. 4 **Oak Ridges Moraine and Rouge Watershed Birding:** A birding and other natural heritage exploration to the south. Actual details of the trip will depend on weather and existing conditions snowshoeing, skiing, and on foot in natural areas. It has been suggested that we may want to arrive down at the Toronto Zoo at early to mid-afternoon, and those who want to, visit the zoo. Zoo admission information at <http://www.torontozoo.com/>. Meet at Coffee Time, Highway 48 south of Baldwin at 8:00 a.m. and dress for the weather. Phone 905-722-8021 if you plan to participate.

Saturday, Feb. 17 **Winter Trail Outing:** A traditional club afternoon adventure in a Regional Forest location in the South Lake Simcoe area. Actual details of the trip will depend on weather and existing conditions snowshoeing, skiing, hiking. Meet at Coffee Time, Highway 48 south of Baldwin at 1:00 p.m. Dress for the weather. Phone 905-722-8021 if you plan to participate.

Date late February **Deer Census in Rouge Park National Park:** Call to register 905-722- 8021. Date to be announced later based on winter weather conditions.

Members, please consider writing and submitting an article to the Talon Newsletter. Submit to one of the Executive members.

Phone Paul 905-722-8021 or Norma 905-476-4747 for further information about meetings and naturalist outings.

2017 SLSN Summary of Projects and Activities Highlights

KEY CONSERVATION ISSUES:

Project Partners:

Jackson's Point community – Georgina, Lake Simcoe SLSN have engaged our members in cooperative involvement in Town of Georgina staff, consultants and area developers planning process and political presentations regarding serious and substantive gaps and design flaws in this Jackson's Point Harbourfront future feasibility study. Council presentations and two comprehensive reports (2) were prepared and submitted to the Town – "Jackson's Point Harbour Re-development Study and Jackson's Point Harbourfront Redevelopment Plan. "Workshop 2 Comments - Jackson's Point Harbour Re-development Study".

Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry – Peterborough, Wildlife Branch SLSN with the Zephyr Society of Lake Simcoe Research Organization undertaking long-term research and monitoring of SAR species of at-risk Ontario Bats at a South Lake Simcoe habitat site, with a focus on the Big Brown bat. Consideration for more comprehensive methods and expansion of sites in 2018 is under consideration. Also, expansion of species under investigation is in developing.

Zephyr Society of Lake Simcoe Research Organization Continuing collaborative research with SLSN on a range of long-term wildlife, landscape ecology and planning projects in South Lake Simcoe Naturalists. Journal publications are in production.

SPECIAL PROJECTS:

Chimney Swift monitoring and Research – Sutton Continuing monitoring of Chimney swifts in 2017 in South-west Sutton in area of proposed Ainslie Hill subdivision development. Previous consultant work in the area had not identified population in area as well as other SAR species. Reports, Council presentations (Town of Georgina) to improve serious planning deficiencies with current developer designs and Plan.

SAR Bats – Ainslie Hill, South-west Sutton Recent awareness of past consultant findings report on SAR Bats (three species including endangered including Little Brown myotis) in development area, suppressed from public release for review. Now reviewed by SLSN and other collaborators, and conversation with partners (eg. local MNRF staff) has led to continuing calls for full conservation of endangered species habitat Eastern-White cedar woodland corridor connected to adjacent Greenbelt forest core areas.

North Gwillimbury Forest Bird Research and Monitoring Collation and analysis of past four years of data of area avian monitoring for publication of results.

Other Engagements The Ontario Municipal Board Review Process – supported Ontario Nature, Environmental Defence etc. submissions. Regular monthly SLSN meetings on naturalist and environmental topics – various speakers. Local and farther afield naturalist outings and field trips.

Greenbelt Review Consultation and Comment SLSN reviewed Province of Ontario proposed revised Greenbelt draft documents and attended government policy meetings and public engagement in 2016 and 2017. SLSN prepared and submitted a detailed report “Growing the Greenbelt at Pefferlaw (Growing the Protected Area of the Greenbelt) at South Lake Simcoe in northern York Region”.

MNRF Natural Heritage System Consultations SLSN engaged with Province of Ontario following the Greenbelt Review Consultation process. Review of reports and workshop participation has resulted in comment on the proposed Natural Heritage proposed plan and support of other comments (Ontario Nature, Ontario Headwaters organization).

Biosolid application on turf operations in South Lake Simcoe Following field research of concerning dangerous biosolid oily slicks in south Lake Simcoe area streams in past four years, research with the Zephyr Society of Lake Simcoe Research Organization has been undertaken. SLSN members published article on the issue in ON Nature Magazine Earth Watch – Monitoring Bioslicks (Vol. 55, no. 2). Research and monitoring continued in 2017.

Sutton Christmas Bird Count (CBC) 2017-12-30 Official Report Summary

Last Saturday many birders in the field and registered feeder watchers in the Georgina, East Gwillimbury and northeast Uxbridge areas participated in the 31st annual Sutton CBC on Saturday December 30, 2017. The day started off fully overcast for owling with an extreme low temperature of almost -20 degrees Celsius. As the day went on the temperature rose to -9 degrees by mid-afternoon. A light persistent wind (10 km/hour) from the southeast shifting to northwest by afternoon occurred throughout the day. Light snow off and on throughout most of the day was followed by intense snow squalls late in the afternoon. The very cold early in the morning during the owling and relatively low winds, resulted in optimum owling conditions. Lake Simcoe was completely frozen and snow covered.

A total of 44 species on the day (lower than most years – not unexpected given the weather), and four count week bird species were recorded. With a lot of December snow before the count it was noted by birders that some birds were generally hard to find away from feeders. Highlights for the count day were a count high of three Owl species heard (Great Horned (2), Barred (1) and Screech (4)) and one Snowy owl (1) seen. Two Bald eagles were recorded, down from 12 last year when the lake was still open. Almost no waterfowl or gulls were seen on count day (because most all water was frozen, except fast moving streams). However, two Black ducks were found and one Ring-billed gull seen by field birders. Southern birds still in our count area were limited, but Golden-crowned kinglet (2), Mockingbird (1), White-Crowned sparrow (1), and Red-winged blackbird (1), three of them at separate feeders were of note and considerable interest. The much talked about northern finches irruption predicted across southern Canada did not appear in the Sutton Count area. House finch (16), Purple finch (10) and Pine siskin (2) were considered low for expectations. Interestingly, Lapland longspur (2), Horned lark (12) and Snow bunting (500) were welcome, but not rare winter species additions to the count. The four significant Count Week birds (not seen on count day) were Canada geese, Tundra swan, Northern goshawk and Peregrine falcon. Thanks to all field birders and feeder watchers who participated in the count.

The 31st Sutton Christmas Bird Count, is one of hundreds of Official Counts (C.B.C.'s) in North America and the world under the auspices of the National Audubon Society. The results of these bird surveys over many years have been essential to scientific research on many aspects of avian ecology, populations and particularly to climate change impact and related critical science. The Sutton Count is supported by the Zephyr Society of Lake Simcoe Research Foundation (www.zephyrsociety.ca) and the South Lake Simcoe Naturalists (www.slsnc.ca).

Paul Harpley and Debra Harpley SLSN

York Region Forest News

The Region will be closing Brown Hill Tract of the York Regional Forest beginning January 1, 2018. Ash trees are being managed for emerald ash borer and due to the extensive trail network and the size of the ash trees, the **Tract will be temporarily closed to all users from January 1, 2018 until spring 2018** (once trail clean-up has been completed).

The Region's Timber Harvest contractor will be continuing work in the North Tract - York Regional Forest beginning on October 25, 2017. The operation is expected to last two weeks.

The Region's Fencing contractor will be undertaking work in the Eldred King Tract and Drysdale Tract beginning on Monday October 30, 2017. The operation is expected to last up to six weeks.

For the safety of the public and workers please keep clear of the operation. Please feel free to forward this email to other forest users. If you have any questions regarding this operation please contact me at Colin.Macdonald@york.ca or 905-830-4444 x7525

Canada to Create overseas Mining Watchdog

Following up from a SLSN meeting about a year ago exposing some serious and concerning mining practices in other countries in the world by Canadian Mining Companies, federal legislation is being considered.



Wednesday December 13, 2017

Canada plans to create an overseas mining watchdog early next year, a move welcomed by environmental and human rights activists. Ottawa says it will create an independent office that will specifically look at Canadian oil, mining, and gas companies' activities abroad.

Reuters reports that this action is significant because the majority of the world's public mining companies are in Canada:

Nearly two-thirds of the world's public mining companies are listed in Canada, while Canadian mining and exploration companies were present in 102 foreign countries in 2015, according to Canadian government data.

Non-government groups have called for years for greater oversight of Canadian mining companies abroad following a number of environmental incidents and accusations of human rights abuses, including that of forced labor at Canadian miner Nevsun Resources' mine in Eritrea. Nevsun has denied the allegations.

A spokesman for Canadian Trade Minister Francois-Philippe Champagne explained that the new watchdog will have both an "advisory and robust investigative mandate."

The Mining Association of Canada, which represents the industry, has not yet commented on the government's move.

Ontario Seed Facility Closing 2017-12-08

This message was received by Dr. Anne Bell, Ontario Nature's Director of Conservation and Education on the closing of the Ontario Tree Seed Plant from the Honourable Kathryn McGarry, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Regards,

Barbara Mackenzie-Wynia, ON Huronia.

From: MIN Feedback (MNRF) [<mailto:minister.mnrf@ontario.ca>]

Sent: Friday, November 24, 2017 1:58 PM

To: Anne Bell

Subject: Message from the Honourable Kathryn McGarry, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry

Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry

Office of the Minister

Room 6630, Whitney Block

99 Wellesley Street West

Toronto ON M7A 1W3

Tel: 416-314-2301

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Dr. Anne Bell

Director of Conservation and Education

Ontario Nature

anneb@ontarionature.org<<mailto:anneb@ontarionature.org>>

Dear Dr. Bell:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Ontario Tree Seed Plant (OTSP). I appreciate hearing about your concerns regarding the closure of the facility and would like to provide you with a response.

While the ministry recognizes that the OTSP has processed and stored seeds since 1923, processing at the plant has decreased significantly as Ontario's forest industry has evolved. Additionally, the purpose of the plant was to assist in Ontario's efforts to re-forest Crown land harvested by the forest industry, not genetic testing or seed tracking.

Since 1996, there has been growth in private sector capacity and we feel comfortable that there is seed extraction capacity available to support the needs of our clients. We have heard through our discussions with a variety of stakeholders that there is a desire among a number of different private sector operators to expand their current roles in seed extraction and storage, including through the potential acquisition of surplus OTSP equipment.

With the closure of the plant, we will be focusing our efforts on establishing the new native genetic seed archive. The archive will support Ontario's biodiversity and climate change research programs. We are also working directly with Forests Ontario to support the continued successful implementation of the 50 Million Tree Program.

In addition to the 50 Million Tree Program, my ministry provides tax incentive programs to assist private land owners in supporting good stewardship on their lands. The Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program encourages sustainable management of forests on private lands and increases forest cover and connectivity, while the Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program promotes the conservation of provincially significant natural heritage values, including significant woodlands. Both of these programs, in addition to the planning and good work conducted by municipalities and conservation authorities, are helping to ensure healthy natural forests in Ontario.

As we move forward with this decision, we understand that there are concerns with transition. I assure you that my ministry will continue to work with our clients in connecting them with seed extraction and storage suppliers throughout 2018 to ensure a seamless transition of these services for our clients.

If you have any further questions, please contact Ken Durst, Regional Services Manager, Southern Region, at (705) 755-3234 or ken.durst@ontario.ca.

Again, thank you for writing.

Best,

Kathryn McGarry
Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry

c: Ken Durst

With species loss rampant in Canada, how is SARA protecting wildlife?

ECOJUSTICE BLOG

Posted in Nature on October 26, 2017 (updated: October 27, 2017)



Liat Podolsky Scientist



Barry Robinson Lawyer



Photo: Bureau of Land Management California via Flickr

Imagine if, during the last 40 years, your population dropped by 83 per cent.

Maybe, like the boreal caribou, harmful resource development projects fragmented your habitat.

Or maybe, like the Southern Resident killer whales, your survival is threatened by harmful underwater noise pollution and a risky pipeline project.

For 50 per cent of the wildlife species in Canada, scenarios like these are not hypothetical. According to [a recent WWF-Canada report](#), 451 of 903 monitored wildlife species in Canada “declined in abundance” between the years 1970 and 2014.

The [WWF-Canada report](#) lists loss of habitat, climate change, pollution, unsustainable harvest, invasive species and cumulative and cascading effects as the drivers of this loss. Combined, [these threats are causing species decline across Canada](#), including among plants and animals that are supposed to be protected under the federal *Species at Risk Act* (SARA).

Which leads to the question: With species loss rampant across the country, how is SARA designed to protect wildlife – and is it working?

The Species at Risk Act

Enacted in 2002, SARA is meant to prevent species from becoming extinct or extirpated, provide for the recovery of species at risk, and ensure that species of special concern do not become threatened or endangered.

Under the Act, the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), assesses and identifies species at risk. Species can be listed as extirpated, which means they no longer exist in the wild in Canada, endangered, which means they are facing imminent extirpation or extinction, threatened, which means they are likely to become endangered if nothing is done to protect them, or of special concern, which means they may become threatened or endangered.

If Cabinet approves the listing, then the law contains automatic prohibitions against harming at-risk species or their residences. These general prohibitions do not apply to special concern species.

Despite these measures, WWF-Canada found that federally listed at-risk populations declined by 28 per cent between 2002 and 2014.

In a 2012 report, Ecojustice found that while SARA is, on paper, capable of protecting species and helping them recover, it has been “plagued by poor implementation” on the ground.

Specifically, here are two SARA tools that have been underemployed or never used at all:

Emergency orders

Emergency orders protect species on federal and non-federal lands and can be issued by Cabinet when a species faces “imminent threats” to its survival or recovery.

Emergency orders are important because SARA’s automatic protections only apply to migratory birds, aquatic species and species on federal lands. In fact, a former senator once described SARA’s limited reach by saying the act only applies to species at “post offices, airports and military bases.”

To date, the government has only issued two emergency orders, for the greater sage-grouse and the western chorus frog.

The sage-grouse order came as a result of a successful Ecojustice case, and was one important reason that the species' population grew from six males in Saskatchewan and 14 males in Alberta in 2014 to 33 males in Saskatchewan and 46 males in Alberta in 2016.

This comeback shows that emergency orders work, and that the government should use them more often.

Safety net orders

Safety net orders allow Cabinet to extend SARA protection to species on provincial and territorial lands.

If he or she determines that provincial laws are not doing enough to protect an at-risk species, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change or Minister of Fisheries and Oceans has the power to recommend Cabinet make a safety net order to protect that species.

However, since SARA came fully into force in 2004, the government has never employed a safety net order.

One species that would benefit from an order is the boreal caribou in Alberta. These iconic animals, most easily recognizable as the face of the Canadian quarter, are threatened by habitat loss. But because much of their habitat falls onto provincial lands, SARA can do little to protect them without a safety net order.

Time to do better

SARA is due for a legislative review soon and a Species at Risk Advisory Committee, composed of industry associations, environmental organizations and indigenous organizations, has already begun discussing improvements for the law.

While we are hopeful positive changes will result from this process, the law in its current form already gives us the tools to prevent further species decline and aid future recovery. We just need the federal government to implement these measures in a timely and effective way.

And when the government is unwilling to enforce the law, we are prepared to take them to court to ensure they fulfill their responsibility to protect plants and animals in Canada.

After all, if you had spent the last 40 years watching your species' population decline, wouldn't you want the same thing?

We are making progress!

Valerie Strain
Buckhorn, Canada



OCT 1, 2017 — Since our dog George died in a kill-trap on a public trail in 2014, we have been trying to update the laws in Ontario so no more dogs are killed – and no children are injured – by these lethal traps. – **Petition Update.**

Specifically, we think trappers should be required to:

- post warning signs when active kill-traps are in the area, and
- have a minimum setback of 150 m from a public trail, road or private property line.

The province of Manitoba passed legislation that imposes these reasonable requirements on trappers. Ontario lags behind and our legislation is seriously out of date. Another trapping season is starting soon and we know more dogs will be killed this winter. Sadly, it happens every year.

The Minister responsible, the Hon Kathryn McGarry of the Ministry of Natural Resources and

Forestry (MNRF) hasn't responded to 83,000 signatures on our petition (www.change.org/notrapsontrails). So we hired the law firm of Gartner & Associates Animal Law (www.animallawyers.ca) to make our case. Our legal team is conferring with leading advocates and animal law heavyweights – some that played a role in getting the laws changed in Manitoba. We are gathering information, building our case, and developing our strategy for moving ahead.

We are optimistic that we will be successful in the end. We have the support of dog lovers, hikers, nature lovers, campers, snowmobilers, anti-trapping activists, even some more progressive trappers. We just need to demonstrate this widespread support to the MNRF – and that's what where you come in.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Spread the Word

Share this petition on social media, talk about it with friends, get just one more person to sign, email your family and friends – let them know this issue is important to you. Let's get to 100,000 signatures!

- Write your MPP

We've made it really easy to write your MPP and/or Kathryn McGarry at www.notrapsontrails.org. Choose your MPP/Riding from the drop-down menu (if you don't live in Ontario, choose Kathryn McGarry), enter your name and email, and click send. Done! MPPs listen to their constituents . Please let us know what you hear back from them. Ask your friends and family to send the email too. If you've done this in the past, thank you!, but it's time to remind your MPP that nothing has been done about the issue.

- Donate to the Legal Fund

If you are able, you can also help by assisting with legal fees. Donations from \$5 to \$500 all help, and are a concrete sign of your support. Visit www.notrapsontrails.org to find out how or send an interac e-transfer to donate@notrapsontrails.org.

- Follow us on Facebook and Twitter

To stay up to date with what's happening with our campaign, follow us on www.facebook.com/notrapsontrails and www.twitter.com/notrapsontrails.

As always, thank you so much for your help. We're getting there!

– Valerie

Climate Change – Urgent Action by World Nations Fumbled AGAIN!

Following up from a SLSN meeting following COP23 exposing some serious lost opportunities and urgent global action needed addressing Climate Change at the international level, the article below details the current grave situation.

COP23 ends without needed progress, COP24 may be the last chance to stay below 1.5°C limit

November 18, 2017 - 10:16am – Council of Canadians (2017-11-21)



A protest inside the Fiji-hosted COP23 summit in Bonn.

The November 6-17 United Nations COP23 climate summit in Bonn, Germany has now concluded.

While the Paris Agreement reached at COP21 in December 2015 committed the world to limiting warming to "well below 2 degrees Celsius" and to "pursue efforts" to keep it below 1.5 degrees Celsius, it did not make a commitment to a 100 per cent clean energy economy by 2050 and the non-binding country emission reduction pledges to date would mean a 2.7 to 3.7 degree Celsius increase by 2100.

At COP15 in Copenhagen, the Harper government pledged to reduce emissions by 17 per cent below 2005 levels by 2020. At COP21, the Trudeau government pledged to reduce emissions by 30 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030. In April 2017, Environment Canada quietly released a

report stating Canada is projected to significantly miss its 2020 and 2030 climate targets with the set of measures it currently has in place.

Bill McKibben has written, "The problem is, our current business-as-usual trajectory takes us to a world that's about 3.5C warmer. That is to say, even if we kept the promises we made at Paris (which Trump has already, of course, repudiated) we're going to build a planet so hot that we can't have civilizations."

Summing up COP23, War on Want executive director Asad Rehman says, "Unfortunately, we haven't really seen the kind of progress that's needed."

It is estimated that US\$295 billion will be needed for countries to take action on adaptation to climate change in the water sector – a tripling of current investment levels. It is anticipated that 40 per cent of the world's population will face water shortages by 2050.

In 2008, The Independent reported, "Hundreds of millions could be forced to go on the move because of water shortages and crop failures in most of Africa, as well as in central and southern Asia and South America."

Indigenous Environmental Network representative Tom BK Goldtooth also noted, "We need to be clear that on the final day of [COP23, it] has not recognized our rights. The final document from the parties to this conference says they only will 'consider their respective obligations on the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities'."

On the fifth day of the talks, Canada's trade minister Minister François-Philippe Champagne, at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Vietnam, issued a media release that stated, "Environment and labour rights will form crucial pillars of [the Trans-Pacific Partnership] and will be subject to dispute settlement mechanisms."

'Investment protection' provisions in 'free trade' agreements like TPP-11, the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) provide powerful tools for transnational corporations to challenge climate action.

And Friends of the Earth Europe says, "The world's remaining carbon budget is shrinking with every year of insufficient progress."

Rehman highlights that if we don't see deeper country emission reduction pledges and as time passes the Paris target of limiting warming to below 1.5°C becomes recognized as no longer achievable, then we need to be talking about a 3°C world and the devastating consequences that will bring for millions of people around the world.

And Rehman notes, "Some people called COP23 the 'process COP', that it was setting up the conversations for next year, and that next year was the last chance saloon for keeping temperatures below 1.5. The U.N. secretary-general [Antonio Guterres], when he came to Bonn a couple of days ago, talked about that we only have a five-year window before we have to make sure that the arc of emissions bends towards meeting the 1.5 goal. Lots of issues are being kicked in touch, have been left 'til next year, which makes the COP in Poland a critical COP. It becomes the 1.5 COP."

COP24 will take place December 3-14, 2018 in Katowice, Poland.

The climate will also very likely be on the agenda of the G7 leaders summit in Quebec five months prior to that.

Brent Patterson's blog – Council of Canadians