



**Our Fundy-Our Future**

# In With the Tide

The Bay of Fundy Discovery Centre Association Newsletter

## Summer Around the Bay of Fundy

By Melissa Merritt

In this Issue:

Sandy Cove Happenings	2
Creature of the Cove	3
Masters of the Offshore	4-5
Cleaning up	5
And More Cleaning up	6
From Our Readers	6
A Hiker's Paradise	7-8
Foggy Red Head	8
A Hidden Gem	9
Erratics Schedule	10-11
Ode to Elms	11
Navigating Safely	12
Contact us	13

**August 29, 2019**

By Jonathan White

*Tropical Storm Erin,  
Moving over us,  
Winds aren't too bad  
A grey day,  
Low, pregnant clouds,  
Rain coming down in sheets,  
Wind occasionally whistling spookily  
through the eaves.  
This day-  
I am forced to rest,  
To take a day off,  
To read, or not,  
To watch a couple of old shows on You  
Tube,  
Meditate,  
Take an hour-long soak in the bath...  
August, still summer,  
Temps in the low 70s  
Perfect.  
Doesn't matter,  
Whatever the weather,  
It's always lovely here...  
On Digby Neck!*

Floating on the surface feeling completely supported by water, while letting the sun shine on my face and smelling the distinct smell of Nova Scotia lake water is the pinnacle of summer for me.

My earliest summer memories were days spent swimming at Timpany Lane beach with my Grandmother. High tide times were the highlight of the day. First feed the chickens, tend the garden and make bread, then finally it was time to head down to the beach. The water was as warm as any heated pool as long as the high water was late in the day. The flats being exposed to the sun all morning and early afternoon heated the rising tide water to a lovely swimming temperature.



Whale Cove was my Whale Cove between the ages of five and seven as my parents rented a small house there. I was related to most of the residents and could head down to the beach anytime. I believe some adult was watching me all the time, but I felt like I was on my own. Whale Cove beach was the perfect place to find beautiful rocks to carry

home to decorate my room. There were also thousands of bank swallows that nested in the red clay bank then, they were fascinating to sit and watch.

Later when I was about eight years old my mother would take us to Sandy Cove beach on the Bay of Fundy side. Mum and usually a friend with children, would lay in the sun to "tan" while the kids would play in the sand. We caught jelly fish, made forts, imagined we were cave men living in the bank and even once I caught a flounder with my hands while swimming. Our favourite time was when the tide was out so we could run on the sand flats.

A little older and now living in East Ferry, I remember a group of friends from the village got one of the moms to take us to the St. Mary's Sandy Cove beach to slide in the mud. It was another highlight of our young lives. Sliding through the slippery mud flats and throwing mud at each other was just plain good fun.

All the Eastferrians (kids from East Ferry) as we called ourselves, would head to French Beach along Petite Passage to have a fire and boil some periwinkles in an old can on the weekend once we were teens.

Later, after meeting a boyfriend from Brier Island, summer days were spent at Pond Cove Beach having

wiener roasts and sometimes camping overnight. Of course, one cannot be accepted into the crowd on the islands unless, at some point, one jumps from the wharf. I remember taking a long time to work up the courage but finally taking the plunge. It was shocking to the system; but I was quite proud of myself for daring to do it.

I remember taking my baby girl to Pond Cove when she was one year old and watching her crawl along the sand towards the water. I could see her determination to make it to the waves but of course as soon as she got close I would run from

behind and bring her back to the blanket.

Six years later I would sit at Pond Cove for a whole day knowing I was in labour for my second baby. I knew I wouldn't have much free time to spend at the beach once I brought the baby home, so we spent our last free day soaking up the sun and swimming in the ocean.

A few years later, we bought land on Haines Lake near Digby and summers were spent swimming. So many friends and their families swam and enjoyed every moment of our short summers.

Seasons and circumstances change, kids grow up, marriages end, friends move away and some have left us forever, but memories of summers spent swimming at the beach or lake are my fondest.

My summers are now spent at Lake Midway. I swim, hike, kayak, lay in the hammock, entertain friends and enjoy every summer moment on Digby Neck that I can.

Take a moment and reminisce about all the wonderful memories made at our local beaches and lakes.

We are truly blessed!

### It's Happening in the Cove

By Jonathan White

This summer was the fourth year for the **Digby Neck Farmers Market**, held four times in July and August. There was a diverse collection of vendors, most of whom returned for each event, every two weeks. (One even drove eight hours round-trip to show her wares!). For the first time, entertainment was provided by singer/guitarist Paul Corbett of Waterford and Bill Lucas's delicious hot dogs were a big hit.



Twice the weather didn't cooperate, but by setting up tables in the gym, the market went on as planned. A delicious selection of food was enjoyed from Kenaan's Kitchen, Ducharme Farm and, when available Driftwood Nursery.

Hand-made items, crafts, homemade soap and more provided a cornucopia of items for market goers and most left with a number of items. The Market is held at the School in Sandy Cove and will be back next year.

**Adult Story Hour** started last year by Freeport summer resident Teri Chace, the adult reading hour continues to thrive at the Eldridge Memorial Library in Sandy Cove. Each month, a volunteer reader provides a half hour of entertainment by reading a short story, or a portion of a book (sometimes funny, sometimes serious, new writers and classics). This is usually followed by a discussion which can go in many different directions, including the reading! It is open to all residents of the Neck and Islands to participate and to be a member of the audience. When it gets too cold for the library, the reading is held at The Schoolhouse Cafe.

Refreshments are provided and all are welcome...Contact Jonathan White at [greenjion@gmail.com](mailto:greenjion@gmail.com)



Enjoying Adult Story Hour in the cosy Eldridge Memorial Library.  
Gwen Wilson photo

**Don't forget to check**  
**[digbyneckandislands.ca](http://digbyneckandislands.ca)**  
**to keep up on things**  
**happening in our**  
**communities.**

## Creature of the Cove: Tachycineta Bicolor

By Roger Outhouse

The photo of my birdhouse and a pair of Tree Swallows are the inspiration for this article. It was an early spring morning when I woke up to a cherry chirping chatter from the back yard. It turns out that a male Tree Swallow was sitting atop my ornamental racoon birdhouse. I know a racoon image might make one wonder if this is an ideal place to attract a potential mate, but it did not stop the repeated enthusiastic serenades throughout the morning. A few days later another attempt was made (can't say if it was the same vocalist) and a female was attracted to the site and looked the real estate over. The male may find a hole in a tree or a human built birdhouse but the female has final say in approval and subsequent acceptance of the male.

A few days later a crow took exception to the new couple in the neighbourhood and verbally and physically swooped down upon the pair and the birdhouse. I really felt the crow was getting very pushy and was considering intervening when the swallows flew circles around and swooped menacingly at the American Crow. The intruder looked shocked and confused and exited the situation with haste. Turns out that swallows can be feisty when any threat appears near a nesting site. Weeks later I received a verbal scolding and dive bombed while painting a bench in the backyard; they never actually made contact.

These birds often return to nest in familiar locations year after year where they feel safe. While the female is the main constructor of the nest made of soft grasses lined with feathers while the male will bring some of the materials needed. The female incubates the eggs for about 22 or so days and both adults supply food for the next 22 days while the young grow and mature. When the young finally leave the nest they quickly

master the art of flight and catching their aerial prey. The adult males have brilliant bluish green back with a pure white belly while the females are a duller blue green with some brown above and a bit greyish underneath. Our most impressive military jets of today are no match for the quick and impossible aerobatics of the swallow. Incredibly they eat, drink and bathe while in flight; watching them skip along the pond surface drinking and bathing at the same time is an amazing sight.

A few years back a large number of these swallows appeared around the breakwater area of the Freeport Northeast Cove and I remember counting 110 individuals perched on power lines while more flew in a dramatic fashion over the waterfront. When they migrate, sometimes thousands at a time, the group is called a "gulp" or a "flight".



The Tree Swallow is located throughout North America except very northern areas in Canada. The population once exceeded 17 million, but an alarming situation occurred between 1966 and 2014 when the population declined to nearly half. Many believe that it is due to lost habitat and/or insecticides contaminating its insect prey. Another possibility could also be climate change with later springs and a condensed breeding season. These birds can take up to one whole month just building a nest and require another month and a half just to hatch the eggs and rear the

young. The young also require additional weeks to feed and build up their bodies for the long and risky migration to winter in the southern United States. To us it is no secret that our spring seasons and even our summers seem to take a long time to arrive and when years are both cold and wet that means a delay a reduction in flying insects to feed the arriving swallows. Competition among bird species for the sparse food may cripple the success of the breeding season.

In light of local reports across Canada of smaller spring arrival numbers of swallows we need to be concerned. Once we get a huge hatch of flies and mosquitoes we hear of huge problems to human habitats and activities.

**WE ALL NEED TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING: A SINGLE NESTING PAIR OF TREE SWALLOWS AND THEIR OFFSPRING CAN EAT OVER 300,000 MOSQUITOES IN A SINGLE BREEDING SEASON. BUILDING OR BUYING TWO OR THREE TREE SWALLOW NESTS COULD BE YOUR BEST CHANCE FOR A MORE COMFORTABLE OUTSIDE EXPERIENCE IN YOUR YARD OR AT THE LAKE. REMEMBER THAT THEY HUNT AT LOW ALTITUDE AREAS OVER CLEARINGS, HOME PROPERTIES, AND AROUND LAKES FROM DAWN TO DUSK. THEY ALSO HAVE A HUNTING RANGE RADIUS OF 14 KM! YOU CAN FIND LOTS OF DIRECTIONS FOR SPECIAL TREE SWALLOW NESTS ON LINE. GIVE IT A TRY! THE OLDEST TREE SWALLOW EVER RECORDED WAS 12 YEARS OLD; THAT'S A LOT OF MOSQUITOS AND FLIES OVER THAT TIME!**

**Meet Our Seabirds: Masters of the Offshore**

By Roger Outhouse

While our shorelines and our coastal islands and peninsula have earned the reputation as a birdwatchers' paradise it is our offshore species that have also equally contributed to our designation as an IBA (Important Birding Area). There are great avian experiences once you depart the land and venture out beyond and into the offshore. Amazing bird species appear that are mostly invisible from shore and even cloaked in fog banks. One might be inclined to think they like to live solitary lives but those who venture out with the whale watch boats quickly realize that they are born to live on the edge in the midst of all the action. All the following are masters at making a living in open ocean by following the feeding frenzies of marine mammals, fish and invertebrates who literally boil to the surface. The incredible behaviours are awesome. Those featured here are a sample of nature's finest performers.

**Wilson's Storm Petrel** (*Oceanites oceanicus*) This adorable little bird has the ability to use shallow wing beats nearly hovering over and actually dances across the water as it plucks small fish and tiny plankton from the sea. Identifying features includes a square tail with a wide white band on its rump and a dark bill with a nose tube. The petrels have salt glands which eliminate sea salt through the nose tube; needed to ensure they are able to survive at sea.



**Leach's Storm- Petrel** (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*) This American Robin size bird has the same salt gland elimination and feeds on the same foods. Unlike the Wilson's Storm Petrel this one has a forked tail and white rump band divided by a brown stripe. Instead of dancing this performer uses its wings to flutter over the surface while pattering across the surface. You might wonder about how difficult it would be to dance or patter over water while capturing and eating a meal.



**Sooty Shearwater** (*Puffinus griseus*) This sooty brown character has a dark bill with some grey under the wings. The shearwater family of birds earned their title because of how their pointed tapered wings allow them to cruise gracefully over the ocean waves with the tips of their wings nearly slicing the water surface. They plunge from 1 to 3 meters above the ocean attacking squid, small fish and other zooplankton to depths over 100 feet. This world traveler can fly over 46,000 miles in a year.



**Great Shearwater** (*Puffinus gravis*) A majestic flyer powered by strong tapered wings that hit the water with a forceful but sleek entry and you can actually see them swimming underwater with the aid of their wings. This leads to a shocking appearance as they appear to be flying out of the water. They consume mostly small fish, squid and small crustaceans while sitting on the surface after a dive that begins from as much as nine meters above water to depths under the sea up to 70 meters.



**Northern Gannet** (*Morus bassanus*) If you want a death-defying high diving act then look no further than the Northern Gannet which ranks as one of North America's largest seabirds. It soars looking for small fish and dives like a spear from heights up to 30 meters and thrusting their wings out straight behind the back in a torpedo shape allowing it to pierce the water with amazing velocity. The bird can also use its feet and wings to swim after prey to depths of 22 meters. The javelin like bill is lethal.



**Atlantic Puffin** (*Fratercula arctica*) Have you ever tried to catch a live fish in your mouth and then catch more adding up to maybe the record 61 small fish held by this bird? No fair using your hands! It has to multi task in order to catch enough food from a single fishing expedition to feed the young on shore. Short tapered wings propel while legs and feet act as rudders to propel the streamlined body under the surface after their prey. The clown like appearance of the head is an artist's dream!



**Red-necked Phalarope** (*Phalaropus lobatus*) Another bird with a fascinating feeding behaviour which involves swimming relatedly in tight circles with its bill in the water that draws plankton and tiny crustaceans to the surface where they can be sucked up a vibrating upper and lower bill like a straw. Take a good look as this bird seems to have lost most of its numbers in the Bay of Fundy.

Population numbers in a small area off New Brunswick and Maine in an area known as the Old Sow had a population of over many millions and now it is scarce throughout the bay. Scientists think climate change and perhaps a major reduction in its food supply has caused them to venture elsewhere.



This is Pippo, the newest addition to our yard in Little River!

**Great Work (and Fun) at Bear Cove**

By Helen Ivens



Thanks to everyone who came out to help trim the sides of Bear Cove Road and clean the cove. We arrived Thursday morning thinking there wasn't too much to clean and the Cove looked quite good after the winter storms. About 20 garbage filled tote boxes later we realized how wrong we were. It is amazing how all the bits and pieces of rope and plastic add up!

A little relaxation and lunch following a hard morning's work was appreciated. Bear Cove is a beautiful place to visit and explore. Now that the trail is trimmed and the beach is "swept", we will begin adding some art to the trail sides and hopefully by early August Bear Cove Road will become an outside art gallery--Bear Cove Art Trail!



Isabelle Gregory-Waldrun was our youngest beach sweeper- it is never too early to begin caring for our planet. A twisted mass of rope larger than Ian Perry was collected and sent to the landfill.

### Where Does It Come From?

By Anna-Marie MacKenzie Kelly

It is 2019. We have some of the best garbage and recycling programs in the world. So, how do our shorelines get so cluttered with garbage?

**June 7<sup>th</sup>**, with a low fog under a clear, blue sky and the foghorn blaring in the distance, I hopped on my bike and headed to Boar's Head Lighthouse in Tiverton to help clean the shoreline of litter.



The work team include O2 students and staff from Island's Consolidated School, representatives from the Nature Conservancy of Canada and members of the Bay of Fundy Discovery Centre Association.



A mountain of debris, mostly fishing gear, was drug, carried, towed and lugged across the rocks to the parking area by a great team of volunteers.



**June 8<sup>th</sup>** was a beautiful day to head out on my bike, once again, to the beach in Sandy Cove for the annual Beach Sweep sponsored by RBC in Digby.



A determined group of volunteers of RBC staff and their families and community residents worked under the warm sunshine to the gentle sounds of the surf lapping upon the sand.



It does frustrate us all that the mountains of waste collected each year are not getting any smaller. But, it is also satisfying to know we continue to have wonderful volunteers working to make our environment cleaner and welcoming. We cannot give up!



#### From Our Readers:

*Congratulations once again for the latest issue of **In With the Tide**. This is such a rich vehicle for sharing the bounty of our little corner of the planet and reinforcing our responsibility to preserve it.*

*Thank you. Bonnie*

*Excellent newsletter!  
Your hard work is appreciated!!*

*Greg*

## Top Ten Reasons Why the Digby Area is a Hiker's Paradise

By Jonathan Riley

Digby County is a hiker's paradise, with miles and miles of beautiful coastal walks and woodland trails like no other place in the world. I originally wrote this piece about the whole province for the Bay Ferries blog, but the reasons all apply even more so to Digby's hiking trails.

Here are my top ten reasons why Digby County is the best place for hiking:

(1) The shore: Look at a map of Digby County and just imagine the secrets hiding along that jagged coastline. Here you can hike spectacular seaside cliffs, long sandy beaches or miles of rocky ledges. You'll find waterfalls, secluded coves, and perfect picnic spots looking out over the ever-changing ocean.



Access to the shore is often as easy as driving to the end of the small roads leading to beaches or wharves or a lighthouse

On Brier Island for example you can stick to the formal Coastal Trail, maintained by the Nature Conservancy of Canada, but you can also wander along local informal trails from Northern Light to Western Light.

(2) Lighthouses: Speaking of lighthouses: the Digby area is blessed with eight of these beautiful, culturally and historically significant icons. While originally intended to guide mariners at sea, these monuments also serve to help walkers on shore keep track of their location.



Check out Point Prim Lighthouse, Bear River Lighthouse (on Winchester Point), Digby's Pier Light in downtown Digby, Gilbert's Cove Lighthouse, Boar's Head Light, Peter's Island Light, Northern Light on Brier Island and Western Light on Brier Island.

(3) Keep cool: The Bay of Fundy's constant mixing bathes the Digby area in cool ocean air, moderating our summers so that hikers in Digby County, especially on Digby Neck and Islands, stay cool and comfortable. And often, if you stay right on the coast, you can avoid blackflies and mosquitos too.

(4) Avoid the crowds: While trails up the Annapolis Valley and closer to the City can be busy in the summer, many of our lesser known but equally stunning trails provide a hiker's paradise. Ask your server or B&B host for directions to their favourite local trail or check out [www.digbytrails.ca](http://www.digbytrails.ca).

(5) New trails every few hours: Digby is surrounded by the Bay of Fundy and the world's highest tides meaning the shoreline changes drastically over the time it takes to enjoy a few scallops or a bowl of chowder. It's endlessly interesting to explore the ocean floor after the tide goes out. But, bear in mind, the tides can also be tricky so it's important to get lots of good local advice before wandering too far on the shore. But with good advice and good planning you can actually walk to Bear Island in Smith's Cove.

(6) Rockhounding and Beach Glass gathering – Combine the most active tides in the world with steep ocean-side cliffs and you get excellent rock and fossil hounding along the Bay of Fundy in places like Harbourview in Smith's Cove, Seawall on Digby Neck, Gilbert's Cove, Sandy Cove, and all the coves really. Beach glass, naturally tumbled and smooth, can turn up almost anywhere on our coast.

(7) Sea mammals: If you want guaranteed whale sightings, you are well advised to take a boat tour. But if you're lucky, it is entirely possible to watch whales and other mammals from many of Digby's seaside trails. Keep your eyes peeled for seals, porpoise, Minke Whales and even Humpback Whales. I personally have seen whales from shore at Brier Island, Boar's Head on Long Island, at Digby's Point Prim, Tommy's Beach, the cliffs of Gulliver's Cove and one lucky day I saw a Right Whale in the Digby Gut. Not to mention, the local favourite and aptly-named Whale Cove. You might also spot these wonderful creatures from any of the provincial or interprovincial ferries.

(8) Unique flora: Our moderate and damp climate is perfect habitat for a wide variety of plants usually found only in more southern climes like the large smelly Skunk Cabbage, the tiny carnivorous Sundew plants or the globally endangered Eastern Mountain Avens. Our ocean fog also makes Digby prime lichen habitat. Digby is the best place in the world to see the beautiful, but globally threatened, Blue Felt Lichen.



(9) Best hiking fuel: Hikers in Digby get to fuel up with fresh scallops or lobster or mussels or clams or haddock ... In fact, a lot of our convenience stores sell dried fish or dulce for snacking on while you hike. Not to mention many of smaller community trails are lined with secret plots of blueberries, blackberries and even wild strawberries in season.



(10) Friendly hiking community: Nova Scotians generally have a reputation for friendliness and the trails and hiking community in Digby is no exception. Many of Digby's best trails were developed and managed by community volunteers. Look for the Fundy Erratics hiking club on Facebook or check out [www.digbytrails.ca](http://www.digbytrails.ca) for more hiking ideas.

Photos by Jonathan Riley

### Hiking Red Head

By Jonathan Riley

A dozen Fundy Erratics enjoyed a cool refreshing walk in the fog on July 20.

With a light onshore breeze pushing cool air from St. Mary's Bay up against the warm land of Digby Neck, we walked in what some people call a dungeon of fog.



Fog often gets a bad rap, but it really helped to make this hike special. For one thing it kept us

cool for most of the hike. It also served to highlight the bright red cliffs, blocking out the background and forcing us to focus on the rock formations closest to us.



And by shifting and lifting and settling in again, it definitely made the hike more interesting – teasing us with views of our surroundings, until finally, near the end of the hike, it cleared off

completely to reveal blue skies and vast ocean views.

Thankfully too, we had the knowledgeable Greg Turner along to answer our barrage of questions about the variety of sea life we were seeing on the exposed mudflats and sand bars.





### Little River's Hidden Gem

By Anna-Marie MacKenzie Kelly

The trail for the Fundy Erratics scheduled June 22<sup>nd</sup> Summer Solstice Sunset Hike to Tommy's Beach in Little River was a gushing waterway due to an amazing amount of rain two days prior to the event making it dangerous for hikers. It wasn't easy to find a new date but Wednesday, July 24<sup>th</sup> turned out to be a perfect evening.

Seven hikers started out at the cenotaph in Little River. As we walked along the river, I shared a bit of history about the village including the belief that Samuel de Champlain came up the river in 1604 in search of fresh water.

Captain Darryl Cheney's House, although not the oldest house, is a registered provincial heritage house built in 1910 during the peak of coastal trading. It is the only Queen Anne style house in the village and sure stands out as one walks along the village road.

Little River Baptist Church, dedicated December 31, 1876, is also a registered provincial heritage building. The Reverend at the time was John Chipman Morse who served the community for 63 years.

Once we began climbing Tommy's Branch Road, we got a glimpse of the cabin used for many summers by Newberry Medal author, Julia Sauer. Julia Sauer (1891-1983) was the author of *Fog Magic* and *Light at Tern Rock*- both books inspired by her time at the cabin. One of her most influential quotes is, "Children should not be protected from the realities of the world. They need both realism and imagination." (*Making the World Safe for Janey Larkins*, 1941)

A quick detour to Ottoview Look-off on this beautiful, clear evening gave us the breathtaking view of the village of Little River, its harbour, and the Acadian shore across St Mary's Bay. It really can't get much better than this!



Back on the trail to Tommy's Beach we stopped to explore "Lichen Rock". This rock is massive and covered in an amazing variety of lichens and mosses. (My apologies for forgetting my camera. You will have to check out the beauty of these plants, yourselves!)



Ragged Fringed Orchids are found at Tommy's Beach

Did I say, "It really can't get much better than this!" when at the look-off? Well, for me, Tommy's Beach is the epitome of natural beauty, especially as the sun is setting. This is my go-to spot when asked, 'Where should we go in Little River?' it is impossible to not feel completely relaxed sitting on the rocks, listening to the sounds of the water and wildlife, or exploring the coastline of this once port area for local fishermen (last used, possibly in the mid 1950s).



We sat, we listened, we saw whales and seabirds. We were in awe as the sun set and the blue sky blossomed into beautiful reds and oranges. It was hard to leave but, we know we can come back.



One question remained, "Who was Tommy?" a quick question to Claudia Tidd of Little River garnered this response, "There was nobody named Tommy. The beach was named, 'Tommy's' because of the 'tommy cods' caught there during my Grandfather Otto's time. They went out in rowboats to catch them. Tomcods were a popular catch back then and resembled small cod."

Maybe our next issue will have a "Creature From Our Past" article about Tomcods.

Photos by Jonathan Riley

### Fundy Erratics Fall Hiking Schedule 2019

#### **WEDNESDAY, September 11 - \*Shipwreck Sunset hike 4.5km challenging\***

Fundy Shore of Digby Neck west of Point Prim - MEET: 5:30 p.m. at the Digby arena, 6 p.m. at Point Prim lighthouse

DISTANCE: 4.5 km

TERRAIN: challenging coastal terrain with basalt shelf, some clambering up and down steep parts, some bushwhacking detours to avoid cliffs

Our homefield hike – shore and winkler trail options. Winkler trails were absolutely flooded all spring so let us hope it has dried up some by September – but there's always the shore – except at high tide. Low tide is 4:45 p.m. that day so we'll have lots of shore if needed.

Beautiful shore with a bit of maritime shipwreck history storytelling at the lonely white granite monument out there on the shore. Not to mention the coast here supports a healthy population of our provincial lichen, the beautiful and globally endangered Blue Felt lichen.

Sturdy footwear and extra clothes in case of weather change are essential. Bring food and water and a headlamp or flashlight in case we are delayed on the shore.

#### **SATURDAY, September 28 – \*Big Lake to Frozen Ocean esker hike all day in the wilderness\***

Details to be announced. Count on spending the whole day, by the time we drive there and complete the walk.

An esker is like a snaky pile of sandy gravel left by glaciers that creates a beautiful backcountry trail. We are going to walk an 8-km esker, locally called turnpikes, from Big Lake to Frozen Ocean and back. For most of the hike we will be in the Tobeatic Wilderness Area and we will briefly visit the backcountry of Kejimikujik.

For this hike, you will need to be in good hiking shape and be prepared for a day in the wilderness and longer in case of trouble. Proper clothing and footwear, plus water and food are essential but also emergency equipment and knowledge of their use. More information to follow later this summer.

#### **SATURDAY October 19 - \*Gulliver's Cove Fall Colours Look-Offssss\***

Gulliver's Cove, Digby Neck - MEET: 9:30 a.m. at the Digby arena

DISTANCE: 800m to start and then 4 km, then heading out again from parking lot to the next-off and the next look-off ...

TERRAIN: first hike is flat seaside fields, second 4km hike begins with a steep long walk up a gravel road and then relatively flat on well-cleared woods trails, third and fourth hikes become increasingly bushwhacky but also increasingly spectacular

Gulliver's Cove is surrounded by hills with several breathtaking look-offs, especially in the fall when the trees have turned. Spend the whole day with us hiking up and down the hills or simply join us for as many hikes up the hill as you can handle. One will be enough for many people I'd guess...

Bring sturdy footwear and fitness to match your ambition. The very first hike is no more than a gentle but picturesque stroll but after that it quickly gets real.

Food and water to keep you fueled. Extra clothes in case of weather change. You'll want binoculars to really enjoy these unbelievable views.

**SATURDAY, November 2 - \*Keji Snake Lake and Gold Mines\***

Kejimikujik National Park - MEET: 9:00 a.m. at the Digby arena or at the park's Mill Falls parking lot for 10 a.m

DISTANCE: about 10km with option to duck off after first half.

TERRAIN: mostly gently-rolling well-cleared woods trails

Parks Canada is also working on a new trail and if it's open, we might change our plan and head to this new riverside trail –stay tuned.

**Ode to Elms**

By Jeff White

I am fortunate in my Digby neighbourhood to be surrounded on one side by many large, stately, old American Elm trees (*Ulmus americana*). I remember well the onset of Dutch Elm Disease in Nova Scotia, thirty some years ago or more. I saw many magnificent elms die off and get cut down - so many in my Grandfather's campground on the Annapolis River, which was the natural playground of my youth.

Today we can still find them - the grand old elms - in our landscape, as well as young ones growing up at every age and stage. But it is best that we appreciate and enjoy them and encourage our children and grandchildren to gaze upon them, even hug them. We may not have them forever.

Are there many mature American Elms on the Neck and Islands? I wonder. Here is a grand specimen in Rossway.



One can see where a very large branch came down from it, in recent years, but it seems unscathed by the loss. It is one of

the largest individual trees we have in our local landscape.

Why not do your own visual survey? As you travel the 217, and sideroads, see the big elms you have in your neighbourhood. Please share the pleasure with others.

This is my sixth summer living in Digby, and I keep seeing the illness, decline, death, and demolition of elm trees within sight of my home. Walking about the town, I see Elms at these various stages, among those that still seem to be healthy. Here are some scenes from my neighbourhood.



One of the largest Elms is between my home and that of Jonathan Riley. He and I have been chatting about creating a list of the greatest trees of each species in our town. Anyone want to help us? This individual between us might be the winning Elm, but... But, I hate to report, I see the first signs of

what might be Dutch Elm Disease taking its toll. A few branches dead, and others with the leaves yellowing and dying en masse. That's how it starts. How long will this Elm last, after two hundred or more years? It is surely older than you and I added together.



Despite the decline in the population, American Elms are still growing up from seed in the landscape. Many live for decades, long enough to produce new trees. But will the future see the giant Elms we have known?

So, take time every week to enjoy an Elm tree, and other fine species. With various incoming diseases and pests, we may yet lose not only the Elms, but the Hemlocks, Ashes, and others! Enjoy them now; never take them for granted. Let the young people get to know the oldest organisms that are their neighbours.

**Keep the Water on Your Right Side, and Other Navigational Tricks**

By Jonathan Riley

In Nova Scotia, hunters, by law, have to take a compass with them in the woods, and they have to be able to navigate with it. I always carry a compass because its batteries never die and the needle's steady pointing in one direction is a powerful, magical little tool.

Although I always carry it, I don't often use my compass, particularly because my smart phone and GPS device are both simpler and more powerful.

What's more, a lot of the time I don't use any device at all but simply follow natural features to get where I'm going.

Easiest of all is the coastline. For example, to find the monument to the shipwreck of the SS Princess Louise, I leave Point Prim and keep the water on my right for about 2 km. When it's time to go home, I keep the water on my left. Easy peasy. The trick here though is estimating the distance. People usually overestimate the distance they have traveled. A lot of people fail to find the monument simply because they turn around too soon.

Rivers and streams are another great navigation aid – following them downstream will make sure you aren't walking in circles, and in Nova Scotia a river will normally bring you to a bridge, a road, a community or the coast.

You can also use lake shores or any kind of easily distinguished boundary, like the edge of a bog or barren or even the edge of a property line where the forest management styles are different. In my searches for lichen, I often use swamp edges to keep track of my progress through the woods – swamps are great places for lichens, but they also usually present a clear boundary for navigating by. These types of guides

Where the trail leads back from the water's edge

Tangled and overgrown

Shoulder your load and strike the road

Into the Deep Unknown.

- Albert Bigelow Paine

require more care and concentration than oceans or rivers, as they can lead you in circles or just peter out and leave you in the middle of nowhere (hint: turn around and go back the way you came).

Geology helps a lot too – near the coast, it is often as easy as walking downhill to find the shore. But even deep in the woods, it is possible to follow geological features like eskers.

Eskers are big snaky berms of gravelly soil deposited thousands of years ago by rivers running under glaciers. These natural highways make for great walking and easy navigation through the swampy

backcountry of Kespukwitk (southwestern Nova Scotia). For example, there is an esker that runs all the way from Fifth Lake on the Sissiboo River over Sixth Lake Stream to the West River and on into Kejimkujik. The river crossings can be tricky but otherwise the walking is as easy as following a well-cleared trail.

The key to good navigation is constantly amassing as much information as possible – a great way to do that is to build familiarity with your own backyard, with the natural features that can serve as guides. Start small, build knowledge and confidence gradually and slowly expand your circle of comfort.

But don't neglect your compass nor your ability to use it – nothing beats the comfort and confidence that comes with knowing, 100 per cent, you could follow your compass on a straight bearing through dense woods.

What is your favourite navigation trick? What natural features do you use to guide you through the woods?



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The Bay of Fundy Discovery Center Association

PO Box 66
Freeport, NS
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