



SPRING 2019 NEWSLETTER



How We Do Beach Days

Our staff sometimes get to spend a day at the beach ... cleaning up others garbage. 2019 will be the final year of a project to track where waste is worst in Tracadie Bay and find ways to improve the situation. Contact us to report debris on shores, help with a cleanup, or propose solutions.

How much waste do you think we collected?

Answer on page 4.

Trent (above) and Sarah (below) collecting some of the many buoys.



Upcoming Events

May 22 Our Annual General Meeting will be held from 7pm to 9 pm at Corran Ban Hall (1231 Rte 6). Our guest speaker, Mary Gallant from Glenaladale Heritage Trust, will discuss the environmental management plans for their 529 acres of land.

June 15 Join our annual hike on the Winter River Trail. Don't forget your camera! See Lady's Slipper plants in bloom, and many other native plant species. Meet at the trail head (145 East Suffolk Road Extension) at 10 am. All are welcome, including dogs on leash.

More information on our website, Instagram, or Facebook pages.

Contact Us

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Help us out by following our social media pages, this helps us get more grant funding.

We would like to thank our funding partners for their support of our work in 2018.

Federal programs:

- Canada Summer Jobs
- Coastal Restoration Fund
- EcoAction
- Recreational Fisheries Conservation Partnership Program

Provincial programs:

- Greening Spaces
- Special Projects Program
- Watershed Management Fund

Other grants:

- City of Charlottetown
- Colleges and Institutes Canada
- Mitacs Career Connect
- Wildlife Conservation Fund
- Individual and business donations



Professional Development

“Continuous Learning” and “Employer of Choice” may not be terms one would associate with a watershed group, but the Winter River-Tracadie Bay Watershed Association takes them very seriously. We believe in hiring the best people available, paying them a fair and competitive wage, and providing them with relevant learning opportunities.

Since 2009, 65 different people have worked for our watershed group, including coordinators Jackie Bourgeois, then Bruce Smith, and currently Sarah Wheatley. Two of our summer hires, Hilary Shea and Karalee McAskill, have gone on to become watershed coordinators for other groups on Prince Edward Island. Others work for Holland College, Island Nature Trust, the provincial Analytical Lab, and the Government of Nunavut, to name but a few.

Each year, the Board’s Field Committee meets to discuss staffing needs and to set the salary scale. Available positions are advertised and, if necessary, interviews are held. Our workforce consists of high school students, college and university students, college and university graduates, and occasionally other adults.

We believe in continuous learning for every employee. We train staff in various skills depending on their educational background, personal interests, and courses available each year including stream rehabilitation, chainsaw safety, emergency first aid, wetland assessment, aquatic system biomonitoring, and watercourse enhancement. All this is done on our time! We teach them how to survey culverts for fish passage, how to plant and maintain trees properly, and how to collect various types of environmental data. Some develop skills related to data analysis, technical reporting, and grant writing. We even provide flexible work schedules for staff who want to take specific courses on a part-time basis in the fall or winter, or to take a week off for a career-related summer college or university course.

The greatest challenge for many young people is to find that first job in their chosen field. We’ve provided the first career-related work experience for many recent college and university graduates; the first job ever in some cases. Many have gone on to find meaningful work on Prince Edward Island.

Watershed groups do much more than protect and enhance our environment. They offer top-quality work experiences that support people on their chosen career path. The Winter River-Tracadie Bay Watershed Association is very proud of all its “graduates”!



Captions (clockwise from top):
 a) Hilary Shea at training course for biomonitoring (2016).
 b) Luke measuring fish in our fish trap (2015).
 c) Staff in stream (L to R) Chris, Bruce, Danielle, Nicole, and Luke (2010).
 d) Matt surveying culvert slope (2018).
 e) Karalee working in the stream (2009).

Update on Charlottetown Water Extraction

The Winter River-Tracadie Bay Watershed Association believes strongly that a permanent reduction in water extraction by the City of Charlottetown is required to enable the Winter River ecosystem to recover from decades of high water demand.

Our message to the provincial government and the City of Charlottetown has been consistent and unrelenting. We want assurances that additional City water supply from the new Miltonvale Park wellfield will result in a net reduction in demand from the Winter River watershed, and that the reduction will be permanent. We need to know that the Winter River watershed will enjoy additional protection from over-extraction in future under the proposed *Water Act* Regulations.

The Miltonvale Park wellfield is fully operation at last and providing 25% of the City's total water supply. This is over 650 Imperial gallons per minute or almost 3,000 litres per minute. We have been assured by the provincial government that the City will be required to reduce extraction significantly from the upper reaches of the Winter River watershed, in other words, from the Brackley and Union wellfields. If additional water supply is found in the lower portion of the watershed at the Suffolk wellfield, the City's new water extraction permit will be amended to reflect these changes.

Your Watershed Association looks forward to discussions with the new Minister of Environment and the new Chair of the City's Water and Sewer Utility. We note that, in its newly-released 2019-20 budget, the City has allocated \$736,000 for upgrades to Winter River Wellfields and \$1,000,000 to the purchase of land to expand its wellfield protection areas. Both initiatives have the potential to benefit our watershed in the long term.

We will continue to monitor the effects of reduced water extraction on stream flow and spring flow in the upper reaches of the watershed. The summer of 2019 will provide us with new evidence of the impact of reducing water withdrawal from the Brackley wellfield. We will keep you informed of the impact through media interviews, our social media accounts, and future editions of this newsletter.



Brackley branch of the Winter River, which has again completely dried up in summer (September 17, 2018). We hope that the new source of water will prevent this from happening in future years, and our streams will be healthy again.

2018 Field Work

Summer field crew: Carley Ross, Sam MacSwain, Sarah McBride, and Trent MacSwain.

Fall field crew: Drew Lorenzen, Fred Johnston, and Chayla Exner.

Supervisors or Interns: Vanessa Jackson, Matt Barr, and Emma Spence.

Watershed Coordinator: Sarah Wheatley

Accomplishments:

- Tree planting: 1,733 trees planted by crew and 776 by home owners.
- Forest enhancement: patch cuts, deadwood clearing and replanting.
- Stream clearing : 4.5km of MacAulay's Creek and branches of Winter River.
- Brush mats: 13 at Beaton's Creek and Winter River branches (Friston, VanWesterneng, Cudmore).
- Shoreline cleanup: 1,030kg of garbage at Tracadie Bay.
- Culverts: 1 removed from unused farm crossing to help fish passage, and 38 assessed for future projects.
- Erosion control: Installed 400 straw bales to reduce erosion at a problem area.

- Structures built for wildlife: 4 insect hotels, 21 debris piles, and 15 bird boxes.
- Property improvements: removed 820kg of debris and planned a trail along the river at our property in Suffolk.
- Water monitoring: water-level loggers, temperature loggers, dissolved oxygen loggers, V-notch weirs, and spring water monitoring.
- Assessments and surveys:
 - * Beaver assessments
 - * Crop mapping
 - * Soil sampling
 - * Bathymetry of Officer's Pond
 - * Culvert surveys
 - * Pond outflow surveys
 - * Headwater surveys
 - * Redd surveys
 - * Wetland assessment

A detailed account of all our field activities is available online at WinterTracadie.ca/field-work

You can donate to support our work at
WinterTracadie.ca/donate



Our crew from left to right: Emma, Sarah W, Liam (volunteer), Trent, Sam, Matt, Carley, Vanessa, and Sarah M (2018).



WINTER RIVER - TRACADIE BAY
WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

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