



Newfoundland Wilderness - WINTER 2014

Photo by Michael Burzynski

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Celebrating 10 years
of keeping our
province **WILD!**

We're 10!!!

Growing up next to the ocean in a small rural community on the Burin Peninsula, I always felt as though I was connected and somehow responsible for the marine environment and its valuable resources.

Maybe it had to do with the fact that my father was a fisherman and always talked about how the ocean was changing and how we had to be mindful of its resources to ensure there was enough for next year.

Although he probably didn't realize it at the time, he was always conservation-minded when it came to fishing and he is probably more so today having experienced first-hand the collapse of the cod fishery in 1992. I think it was this mentality that instilled a passion for conservation within me.

Today I still feel responsible for protecting the ocean as well as our land based wilderness areas. It's this passion that led me to study environmental



conservation and find myself working for Newfoundland and Labrador's voice for wilderness, CPAWS-NL almost 10 years ago.

I have enjoyed working with this organization and am very proud of how our chapter has grown over the past decade. We have much to celebrate and we hope you enjoy this update which highlights some of those successes.

Today, our office continues to advocate for the protection of wild spaces on land and water around Newfoundland and Labrador. There is still much work to be done as CPAWS moves forward with its vision to protect 50% of Canada's public lands and waters.

Luckily we have a great assets to dedicate to the job - most importantly our wonderful team of dedicated staff across the country, thousands of volunteers and many great partnerships. After all, we wouldn't have gotten here without 10 years worth of conservationists and wilderness lovers helping build this great organization. The continued contributions of all of our supporters will be essential to our success over the next 10 years!

Thank you for all you do and have done to keep our province wild!

Tanya Edwards,
Executive Director

A Decade of Conservation...



CPAWS-NL has accomplished a lot since officially becoming a chapter in 2003. Here are some of the highlights:

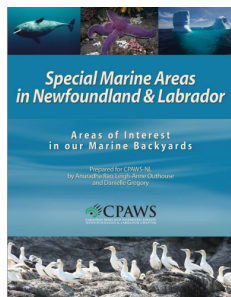
Developed protected areas stewards program which continues today. Volunteer stewards visit protected areas in NL and monitor on disturbances, destruction, etc.

Began Puffin and Petrel Patrol Program with Juergen and Elfie Schau

Mealy Mountains National Park campaign



Campaign for sustainable forests in NL



Developed Responsible Ecotourism campaign

Published Special Marine Areas Guide in Newfoundland and Labrador: Areas of Interest in our Marine Backyard

Campaign to push for a national marine conservation area on the southwest coast

Developed Adopt-a-Beach program in partnership with Canadian Wildlife Service and Environment Canada

Released National Geographic Geotourism MapGuide and website

Released Ocean Memories, Oceans Now and Then video

Campaign for sustainable forests in NL



Caribou and You campaign to protect caribou

Completed a protected areas economic assessment study for Butter Pot Provincial Park

Laurentian Channel Area of Interest

Encouraged the release of the Natural Areas System Plan for NL

Save Gros Morne campaign

(Parks Canada Photo)

Government says 'frack off' to Gros Morne drilling plans....for now

If you've ever had the good fortune to visit Gros Morne National Park, you know it's stunning. Even if you haven't yet set foot there, pictures alone will tell you this is a gorgeous gem that needs to be protected.

In November there was a huge step taken towards protecting UNESCO World Heritage Site when the Newfoundland and Labrador government announced a moratorium on fracking in the province until they had studied regulations that should apply for this kind of industrial development.

Since then, the offshore petroleum board has announced that it would not renew the exploration license of the company that was proposing it. Their license expires on January 14.

This is a very significant step towards protecting nature around the park for future generations.

Concerns of the park becoming an industrialized landscape stemmed from a

proposal to drill a series of oil exploration wells in the Green Point Shale along the west coast of Newfoundland. The drilling program would use hydraulic fracturing, commonly known as fracking, which involves the high-pressure injection of water containing toxic chemicals to shatter underground shale beds to extract oil.

Fracking is extremely controversial because of growing evidence of its potential negative effects on the environment and on human and animal health. These threats include the contamination of huge amounts of water required by the fracking process, the injection of toxic chemicals deep into the ground with the potential for groundwater or marine contamination, intense trucking activities on

park roads, the flaring of waste natural gas, and the noise, smell, and industrial activity of an intensive drilling operation.



Although there will be no drilling on park land, drill sites were planned within metres of the park boundary.

Of course, it's still possible for companies to put forward drilling proposals in this region in future years. What we need is a permanent buffer-zone around the park to keep it safe from harm for generations to come. That's the victory that we still need to achieve.

For now, however, we should celebrate this great news for one of the crown jewels of our national parks.

To learn more about how you can help Save Gros Morne National Park visit www.savegrosmorne.ca.



Speaking up for the Southwest Coast

A new national marine conservation area could help turn the corner

Newfoundland's southwest coast is a place of amazing beauty, sad history and determined perseverance. Both the human culture, which is so entwined with the marine environment, and the ecological integrity of



the coast, which has been relatively untouched since the demise of the cod industry, continue to exist in harmony.

Located between Port-aux-Basques and the Burin Peninsula, the proposed site for a National Marine Conservation Area (NMCA) on the southwest coast includes low sandy beaches to the west and immense granite cliffs and deep fjords to the east. It is the largest, undeveloped alpine coastline in Canada.

The coast is ice-free year round, providing winter ranges for blue, humpback, fin and killer whales. Summer residents of note are leatherback turtles.

Local residents have supported the creation of an NMCA for this unique coastline for many years. Despite this, however, in February 2012 the provincial government turned down an offer from Parks Canada to conduct a feasibility study for a NMCA in this area. The decision was very disappointing, but CPAWS-NL is not about to give up. We'll continue to press for the establishment of this conservation area to preserve the historic human culture and the environmentally-crucial coastline, both of which are important elements in choosing the sites for Canada's future network of marine protected areas.

Puffin & Petrel Patrol to the Rescue!

By Leah Mahoney

It was another great summer helping rescue pufflings with the Puffin and Petrel Patrol Program!

This was my second summer volunteering and I was happy to see how many new patrollers came out and how many had returned from previous years. In all more than 50 volunteers took to the roadsides of the southern shore at night to search for stranded puffins and petrels.

The patrol is a part of the Seabird Habitat Improvement Campaign and is a success because of our volunteers. Our teamwork this year saw CPAWS-NL rescue more than 70 puffins. Of those, 80% were banded by the Canadian Wildlife Service. There were also about 16 stranded Leach's Storm petrels rescued and released. These birds are somewhat harder to see and are more mobile. Overall, this was a major drop in numbers compared to the previous summer, which saw 500 puffins rescued. I think this has a lot to do with the amount of support the surrounding towns are now showing for the dim your lights campaign.

My first summer of volunteering, I was personally involved in more than 50 individual rescues. This past summer I wasn't involved in any. Although I was discouraged at first, I started to notice I was using my flashlight in places I previously hadn't needed it. I realized more citizens and companies along the southern shore were dimming unnecessary lights. The low bird rescues and sightings show that it's helping.

It's been a phenomenal year in terms of outreach stemming from increased media attention, as well as public presentations for schools and interests groups. That's also helping to attract more and more volunteers.

Local businesses and home owners are happily becoming engaged. In addition to dimming unnecessary lights, they provided equipment that volunteers needed, which was great to see. It's very encouraging to have so

many people wanting to patrol the streets and do what they can for these birds.

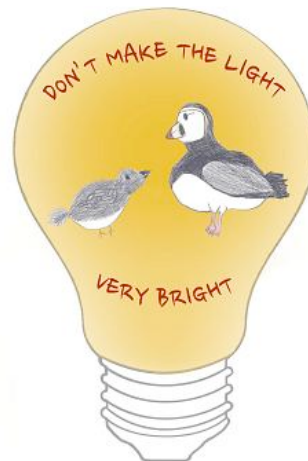
However, even with the low bird count this year, no birds on the roadways would still be the best scenario. As volunteers, we know the patrol better than anyone and we should encourage mitigation measures that will deter these birds from coming to the shore and becoming stranded in the first place.

So what more can we do?

Take notice of lights that you think may be a problem, note the number of birds found in an area and then report your findings. That will help bring attention to the problem that much sooner.

Thanks again to our many wonderful volunteers. You've helped this program truly take flight!

For more information visit the *Witless Bay Puffin Patrol* Facebook page.



Puffin' Along Far From Home



By Kathy Williams
(A Newfie in spirit)

Who would have thought that I would end up in Newfoundland?

Two years ago, my daughter Alexa read about puffin patrolling in a book about 100 things parents should do with their children before they grow up. She was immediately drawn to the puffin experience in Iceland.

“Are you out of your mind,” I asked, always the encouraging mother. “We are not going to Iceland.”

Not discouraged in the least, Alexa emailed a number of contacts in Iceland and after receiving discouraging responses,

promptly began researching other puffin experiences. She came across Juergen Schau’s website and contacted him. We received immediate and heartfelt encouraging responses. Next, Alexa came up with the offer to “pay for” the airfare with air mile points if I would cover other expenses. Long story short, we ended up in wonderful and friendly Witless Bay.

The experience was everything we could have dreamed of and more. Alexa was able to learn about animal conservation and rescue first-hand and communicate her knowledge to other visitors. She was even interviewed on live radio.

Despite the first year being filled with non-stop puffin patrolling, Alexa made many new friends and experienced a culture much different from our home in landlocked Pennsylvania.

We went berry picking, saw the lighthouse and almost ran down a moose with our car on the way to our return flight.

This past summer Alexa decided we’d return. Anticipating a very busy puffin season, we began our trip with a long weekend at a friend’s cabin. There Alexa experienced kayaking, living without electricity and a real charcoal fire for hot dogs. Luckily, the puffins seemed to navigate better this year and there were fewer to rescue, leaving us with time to visit with friends and soak up the wonderful scenery.

All of these experiences combined to once again make St. John’s and Witless Bay a wonderful family vacation spot.



Photo by Kate Ali

President's Report

Happy 10 years CPAWS-NL!

We've been going strong and here's to decades more of continued success in conserving parks and wilderness province- and nationwide!

I'm happy to report that our local conservation campaigns and projects are flourishing in every way and we're very optimistic as we gear up for a great 2014.

While our outlook here at CPAWS-NL is very positive, we've got quite a busy job ahead of us as the media reports about the future of our marine and terrestrial environments have been rather lacklustre. From news that Canada has fallen behind world leaders in marine protection, to our own province rejecting a Parks Canada study for a national marine conservation area on the southwest coast, to concerns of fracking of oil reserves near the boundaries of Gros Morne National Park, I feel Canada and our province are still falling down on the job to protect our wild and unique spaces.

However, I applaud the provincial government on

working hard with us and other groups to achieve a certain level of wilderness protection, including the recent announcement of a moratorium on fracking in the province until more studies are conducted on the environmental feasibility of this potentially damaging practice. I am equally intrigued by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada's recent recommendation to list the Atlantic cod in the Species at Risk Act. Just think of the conservation implications for marine habitat if this were ratified.

While I remain positive, I must point out that the global demand for forestry products increases daily (the global wood demand will triple by 2050). Similarly the global demand for petroleum increases at an astonishing daily rate as well, all despite conservation efforts around the world and technology advances to increase global efficiency. It's more important than ever to take stock of the current state of the environment and to realize that we - global citizens, industry, and governmental institutions- need to make an effort *right now* to conserve and protect

our wild spaces for the future. CPAWS-NL is very proactive on this matter in Newfoundland and Labrador and I think our province is listening.

From the national Save Gros Morne campaign, to our own campaign in community forestry and ecosystem-based planning, it's been a year full of successes for CPAWS-NL and the environment. There's been great work done on the seabird conservation and habitat improvement program, the expansion of our shorebird survey and Adopt-a-Beach programs, as well as our integrated approach in conserving important marine areas off our coast and the highly successful Geotourism Mapguide.

We lament the recent passing of our past-president and friend Don Steele, but are grateful for his tremendous contributions to wilderness conservation over the years and the positive impact he had on those fortunate to have known and worked with him.

His life's work is continuing in good form through the efforts of CPAWS and other like-minded groups and inspired individuals.

I'd also like to applaud our own Bob Halfyard for becoming Newfoundland and Labrador's newest trustee to CPAWS National. His voice will be invaluable to our mission.

Thanks to all of you who have contributed to wilderness protection - we couldn't have done it without your continued dedication.

Here's to a wonderful nature-filled year-end and a prosperous and biodiversity-rich new year!

Dan Ficken
CPAWS-NL President



Don Steele



Goodbye to a tireless warrior

We'd like to honour the memory of one of the founders of the Newfoundland and Labrador chapter of CPAWS, Don Steele. An instrumental voice for CPAWS-NL from the beginning, Don served as chapter president for a number of years. Up until his death last spring, he'd been a fixture in this community. Don had a great passion for promoting natural and cultural heritage, and he worked tirelessly for the protection, preservation and the sustainable use of resources.

Don always encouraged cooperation between environmental groups saying

that if we worked together our voice would be stronger. He was gracious with what he had and wanted to share opportunities with all. He empowered many people and his memory and activism lives on in those he inspired.

It's been our privilege to work with someone who always put the best of himself into his work: his determination, his courage and his brilliant intellect. Don will always be remembered for his compassionate nature, his fighting spirit, and his unwavering dedication to the protection of our natural resources.

Beaches Need Families Too...

Adopt one today!

For the past few years, CPAWS-NL has reached out to key communities along the southern shore of Newfoundland to try to recruit volunteers to become stewards for our Adopt-a-Beach program.

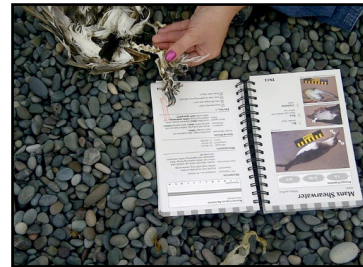
Their job is to monitor birds washing up on local beaches on a bi-weekly basis. While surveying for beached birds, they also monitor causes of mortality in the marine environment, which can otherwise be difficult to assess. Collected data is used to provide scientific-based information that helps with management decisions at various levels.

Monitoring mortality rates is critical to ensuring our marine environment and its resources are healthy, sustainable and available for future generations!

If you're interested in participating in our Adopt-a-Beach

program, please let us know. We provide you with the survey kits and training needed to succeed.

We'd like to thank our dedicated volunteers who regularly monitor their designated beaches.



Your presence and efforts also help us increase public awareness and appreciation of the marine environment, the threats it

faces and the ways we can reduce those threats. Our volunteers are invaluable to the success of this program, so again, thank you!

For more information on this program please visit our website, <http://cpawsnl.org/campaigns/adopt-a-beach>.



Avalon Wilderness Reserve Steward Report

By Aaron O'Brien

I've volunteered with CPAWS-NL as a protected areas steward since 2007. I visit protected areas in the province and submit reports detailing my observations. To date I've mostly written about the Avalon Wilderness Reserve, as it's near where I live and I enjoy hiking there whenever I can.

A number of factors make this reserve especially vulnerable to disturbance. Although it's located in the interior of the Avalon Peninsula where there are no communities, it's surrounded closely on all sides by roads and coastal towns. Many cabins have been built nearby and in some cases right up to the reserve boundary. Numerous ATV and snowmobile trails also touch its perimeter. Some even

penetrate into its interior, despite the fact that such trails are against regulations. Also of concern is a rough dirt road which predates the establishment of the reserve and gives access to its remote interior. Some people have used Horse Chops Road to move in and set up mobile campers on a non-temporary basis, which is also against regulations. All of these factors impinge upon the integrity of the reserve by allowing people easier access to its fish and game resources. The more accessible these resources, the more likely they will be depleted. Anecdotal evidence from hunters suggests this is happening.

Of particular concern is the caribou herd whose territory is largely encompassed by the reserve, which was originally established to protect these animals. The herd is the most southerly herd of caribou in North America, but is now at dangerously low numbers due to a decimating

brain parasite and coyote predation. That's why it's more important than ever to make sure that the reserve's rules are enforced and abided by. We need to give the caribou the best possible chance to recover. Unfortunately, the provincial government doesn't put sufficient resources into enforcing these rules and some people take advantage of this. They overfish, over hunt, and in some cases, poach caribou.

Protected areas stewards are a great asset in this respect. They help make sure that breaches of regulations do not go undocumented. Stewards' reports make it that much harder for government officials to ignore such violations.

The Avalon Wilderness Reserve is just one of this province's great protected areas. There are others that are also in need of more careful monitoring. It's been immensely fulfilling for me to take part in this CPAWS-NL program and I encourage others to participate. Let's do our best to preserve our natural heritage for future generations to enjoy.



Photo by Mike Jones via Flickr

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Newsletter

Holly Lake

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- YES, I want to become a member
- YES, I want to renew

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