

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF BONNECHERE PARKS

SPRING/SUMMER 2002

Web: www.bonnecherepark.on.ca
Email to Editor: dhouse@renc.igs.net

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If we ever make a film about the necklace of provincial lands along the Little Bonnechere River (and if some other film maker hadn't beat us to it) we could call the blockbuster: A River Runs Through It, because as varied as the landscapes are which stretch from the headwaters at McKaskill Lake to Foy's Beach on Round Lake, the common thread is this historic river. Today, as it has for centuries, the Little Bonnechere unites the past with present, and people with resources.

One of nature's life-lines is here and it's ours – all of ours – and the Bonnechere Park Management Plan should support its stewardship for generations to come. In the short term, these waters are for celebrating, and we've already kicked off 2002 which we've baptised 35 and 10 in honour of the Park's 35th and the Friends' 10th anniversaries. When Merril Burchart and his crew navigated her waters in a reproduction pointer boat to open the season, the Little Bonnechere showed us yet again that she is here for us yet still firmly in command.

Betty Biesenthal, Editor

A BOAT-BUILDER'S DREAM COME THROUGH The Little Bonnechere

For several years long-time Park supporter Merril Burchart has been building miniature replicas of pointer boats and local buildings including the Basin Depot cabin. Although he hasn't yet mentioned building a life-sized version of the cabin, this past spring he dedicated over 100 hours to the construction of a Cockburn pointer boat which he has very generously donated to the Park and the FBP in recognition of 35 and 10.

This past Sunday, May 19, special guests, Friends and Park visitors gathered on the shores of Round Lake at Bonnechere Park to welcome Merril and his crew as they came ashore in *The Little Bonnechere*. Although the day was unseasonably cool and overcast, there were plenty of bright smiles to recognize this historic journey for it was the first time in 60 years that a pointer boat has plied the waters of the Little Bonnechere River.

Historian and author of *Spirits of the Little Bonnechere*, Rory MacKay was on-hand to celebrate the historic arrival. "Today marks the first occasion in this century and in this millennium where a pointer boat has plied the waters of the Little Bonnechere, and to these gentlemen I offer my congratulations on being part of the history of this river."

Comprised of Merril's brothers and nephews, the crew launched on Saturday just south of the Algonquin Park gate near Basin Depot. Along the way they stopped at Turner's Camp to visit Reg Turner who in 1942 was one of the last men to navigate a pointer boat down the Little Bonnechere. According to Burchart, Turner approved of the authenticity of *The Little Bonnechere*. "...he said that's exactly what they were like... four men could stand on the side and the thing would never tip." The crew stayed at their camp on Stevenson's Lake overnight, then headed into Round Lake in time for Sunday's celebrations.

Acting Park Superintendent Vicki Bradley welcomed the crew and thanked the Burchart family for being part of the anniversary celebrations. More importantly, she acknowledged the donation of the pointer



FBP Director Jane Duff welcomes ashore The Little Bonnechere and her crew: boat-builder Merril Burchart and family members Frank, Dean, Eldon and Dave Burchart.

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Notes from Bonnechere

Bonnechere Provincial Park was established in 1967 as part of the Canadian centennial celebrations. Since that time, the park has developed and changed considerably. In the past 35 years it has grown to 128 campsites and many facilities have been improved or added. Recent renovations to the Visitor Services Centre allow for programming despite inclement weather, and retail space for the Ontario Parks Store. In our Natural Heritage Education Program this summer we hope to show our park visitors how we've grown over the years and how instrumental the FBP have been since their inception a short 10 years ago.

We kicked off our *35 and 10* celebrations on May 19 when a 19' pointer boat was rowed down the Bonnechere River to the shores of Round Lake. Built and constructed by Merril Burchart, a boat of this kind has not been used on the Bonnechere River since the 1940s. Park staff are very excited about using the pointer boat in their interpretive programs. Thank you again Merril for the donation.

The official anniversary weekend for the Park is July 12 and 13. On Friday evening we'll host a thrilling spirits night based on the history of our great park. Saturday's activities include an exciting kids' adventures program in the morning, followed by a hot dog lunch and the launch of the *Walks of the Little Bonnechere River* guide book. Finishing the day will be a special program by *Freshwater Trade*. This musical presentation celebrates the trade industry of years past on Ontario's waterways, including our very own Bonnechere River.

We hope you can join us for our *35 and 10* anniversary celebrations. Please see the schedule of events in this newsletter for a full listing of programs and if you have any questions contact the Park at 613-757-2103.

Vicki Bradley, Acting Park Superintendent
Ian Covell, Natural Heritage Education Leader

boat. "This is awesome. We take great pride in having it here for the public to see and we may even get it in the water some time." Plans are for Park and FBP staff to develop interpretive programming based on the history of the pointer boat so this unique part of Ottawa Valley river and logging heritage will be preserved for generations to come.

Rory MacKay then took a few moments to offer a short history of the pointer boat and the Little Bonnechere River. "As early as 1836, this waterway was being used for the harvesting of timbers and sawlogs. In order to accomplish that task, supplies had to be taken upstream and then transported with the men as they were doing the river drive downstream, and this is the kind of boat that did that."

MacKay added that it is probable that J.R. Booth played a role in the initial development of the pointer boat which was designed by John Cockburn circa 1868. Ultimately, the pointer boat plied many Ottawa Valley rivers carrying camp supplies and log drivers. These Pembroke-built boats were also used extensively across Canada to develop various rivers and ports.

Although he had no blueprints, Mr. Burchart had plenty of reference close at hand to guide him as he built this 19-foot, 400-lb replica. The Champlain Trail Museum in nearby Pembroke houses one of the original pointer boats built exclusively by three generations of Cockburns. Said to be able to turn on a heavy dew because of its shallow draft, "the pointer boat varied in size from 16 to 60 feet in length. The boat required high ends to break the waves in fast water, a rounded v-bottom, and pointed ends so that it could be reversed in direction without having to turn the boat around," noted Rory MacKay.

"I had no plans. I had a couple of nephews to help me with the first boards, but I built it backwards," said 70-year-old Mr. Burchart with a chuckle. "I put the planking on and then put the ribs in after. I put the first board down, one centre rib – a heavy-duty one – then put in some of the others ones and it just fell into place."

After the celebration, Burchart beamed with pride: "It was beautiful. It's a lot of history; it's pretty fantastic."

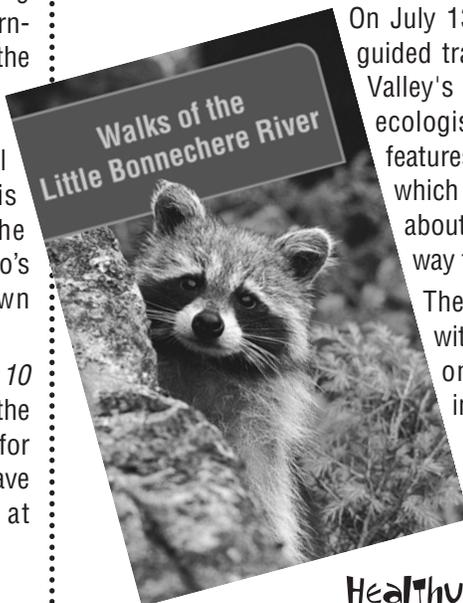
With files from the Pembroke Observer and the Eganville Leader.



I hope its put on display where it will last for 100 years.

Merril Burchart

WALKS OF THE LITTLE BONNECHERE RIVER



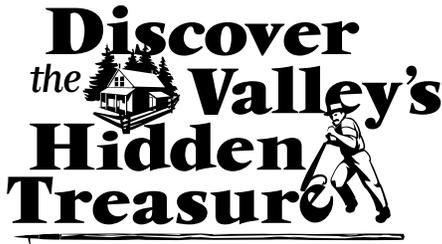
On July 13 the FBP will launch its newest publication, a self-guided trail book featuring ten hikes along one of the Ottawa Valley's historic waterways. Historian Roderick Mackay and ecologist Mark Stabb bring to life the cultural and natural features of each site to tell the story of the people and places which make this area unique. It's a great way to learn more about the story of Canadian settlement while walking your way towards a healthier lifestyle along the Little Bonnechere.

The FBP are erecting 10 trailhead signs to correspond with this new trail book. For just \$75 donors can sponsor one of these unique hand-carved posts. If you are interested, please contact: Jim Fraser, 613-732-5574.

Thanks you to our publication partners: The Friends of Algonquin Park and the Healthy Living Partnership of the Renfrew County and District Health Unit.



Discover the Valley's Hidden Treasures



The following events are highlights from our 2002 Bonnechere Park Calendar of Events – plan to join us and be sure to tell your friends. Keep in mind you will require a Valid Daily Permit or Camping Permit to participate in most of these activities. For additional info or event updates call 613-757-2103.

June 12, Wednesday

Eastern Central Ontario Artists Association paint-in at the park hosted by Hershel Payne.

June 29, Saturday

Celebrate Canada's birthday at Bonnechere Park. Fun for the whole family!

July 12 & 13, Friday & Saturday: Bonnechere Park's 35th Birthday Party

Fri, 8:00 pm: Spirits Night – a dramatization of 35 years of recent Park history.

Saturday:

Noon: Bonnechere Park's Birthday Party – cake and hot dogs on the beach.

2:30 pm: Launch of *Walks of the Little Bonnechere River*.

3:00 pm: 1-hour guided hike of McNaughton's Walk.

8:00 pm: *Freshwater Trade* – experience a musical performance celebrating the cultural heritage of Ontario's waterways.

July 20, Saturday

7:30 pm: Author Peter Unwin launches his book about the sinking of the Mayflower paddle steamer – *Nine Bells for a Man* – with a slide show and book signing.

July 24, Wednesday: OFAH Fishing Demo

10:00 am: The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters hosts a 2-hour demonstration on fishing and netting. Rods provided.

July 27, Saturday: The Seasoners

7:30 pm: Back again by popular demand, this talented group of Ottawa Valley musicians will be featuring new and traditional fiddling and stepdancing performances, including pieces from their just-released CD – *House Party*.

August 9 & 10, Friday & Saturday: FBP 10th Birthday Party

Fri, 8:00 pm: *Who Killed Marshall the Wood Turtle?* – A Murder Mystery.

Saturday:

10:00 am to noon: Ontario Archaeological Society kids' workshops & Art-in-the-Park.

Noon: Bonnechere Park's Birthday Party – cake and hot dogs on the beach.

1:00 pm: Community Fair featuring local arts and craft.

7:00 pm: FBP AGM and presentation of Board of Directors' Award.

8:00 pm: *Park! Park! Park!* – Join David Archibald for a musical camping adventure.

August 17, Saturday: Spirits Night

8:00 pm: Visit Bonnechere's spirits of the past on this moonlight walk into the past.

August 24, Saturday: Wolf Howl with Mike Runtz

8:00 pm: Author and naturalist Mike Runtz leads this moonlight excursion into nearby Algonquin Park in search of a howling wolf pack.

September 14, Saturday: Dig, Pig and Jig

Tour an active dig site and watch professional archaeologists at work in the field and in an outdoor lab. Hosted with the support of the OAS, Ottawa Chapter. Walk about Basin Depot and the Lafleur homestead. Refreshments for sale. Pig roast at 6:00pm at the Davenport Centre followed by entertainment.

Kid's Camp

Enhance your stay by taking part in various interpretive programs – something for the whole family!

Kids' Adventures

Kids explore the natural, cultural and recreational resources of Bonnechere Park through crafts, games, water sports and outdoor adventures. Runs three mornings a week for kids of all ages [young children must be accompanied by an adult].

Family Programs

Topical evening programs ranging from night hikes to campfires and slide shows. Something for everyone on Wednesdays and Saturdays!

Summer Schedule

June 24 through Labour Day

TUESDAYS

10:00am to 11:00am

Kids' Adventures

WEDNESDAYS

10:00am to 11:00pm:

Lafleur Homestead Guided Tour

*be sure to pre-register
transportation required*

7:30pm to 9:00pm

Family Programs

THURSDAYS

10:00am to 11:00am

Kids' Adventures

SATURDAYS

10:00am to 11:00am:

Kids' Adventures

10:00am to 11:30am

Artist-in-Residence Workshop

July 6, July 20, August 10

7:30pm to 9:00pm:

Family Program

For up-to-date information on Park events watch for the "What's on at the Park" posters or check out our Web site:

www.bonnecherepark.on.ca

While on-line read back issues of our newsletter or order one of our books. Be sure to sign in if you are not a member and want to be added to our mailing list.



RESERVE YOUR SPOT: 1-888-ONT-PARK

Revisiting the Lafleur Homestead

Last summer funding from Canadian Parks Partnership enabled the FBP to host two unique children's programs. The historic archaeological camp for grade five students successfully introduced over 175 kids to pioneer life at the Lafleur homestead.

All students dug in their own squares, scientifically recovering artifacts believed to be from an early cabin. The next step saw the students cleaning their artifacts and properly identifying the finds. Guided hikes featuring built heritage and the recovering forest rounded out the learning experience. Maybe the best indication of success was the tired, smiling faces of the kids at the end of the day.

The second program included pre-booked spots with the Canadian Voyager Adventure program. Kids from ages eight to twelve paddled a 20-person Voyager canoe up the Bonnechere River eventually landing at the Lafleur homestead. Costumed Park interpreters then took the visitors for a guided hike of the homestead. The lives of the Lafleur family were illustrated through the use of photos, artifacts and stories provided by family members.

These programs clearly demonstrated that learning could be fun. The Friends hope this unique historic archaeology camp can be a continuing part of the grade five curriculum of Ottawa Valley students and hope to find funding to continue to offer this program.

SUMMER RAFFLE

This September the FBP will be raffling a Langford canoe, a Woods sleeping bag, a Columbia golf shirt, a set of binoculars and a Hershel Payne original painting. For your chance to win be sure to pick up a ticket [or two] next time you are at the Ontario's Park Store. This is a great fundraising opportunity for the FBP. Thanks for your support.

Can You See the Future Forest Between the Rows of Trees?

When the settlers arrived in this, as in many other areas of Southern Ontario, they cleared large areas of native forest cover in an effort to farm these areas. Over time, they discovered that many lands, particularly those with light, infertile sandy soils were not suitable for agriculture. Without the tree cover to anchor, enrich, and shade the soils, some of these areas became very vulnerable to erosion and became deserts of shifting sand in only a few years. In the end, the farmers abandoned many of these lands.

In an effort to rehabilitate these sites, conifer trees have been planted in many of these areas because planting an instant 'native forest' is not possible or feasible. Establishing and caring for hardwood plantations is very difficult and expensive. Many hardwood species cannot survive in the harsh environment of an open field. In nature, most hardwoods become established and grow in the shelter of other, already established trees.

Although pure stands of conifers made up only a small portion of the native forest, they were one of the first species that established on sites that had been devastated by major natural occurrences such as fires. Through the process of succession, these conifer stands eventually evolved into a mixed conifer forest. Planting conifer species is an effort to emulate this process. In the Bonnechere area native pines that are suited to this area (red pine, white pine, jack pine) were chosen as the start of a new successional process.

As conifer trees develop, their roots stabilise the soil and reduce soil erosion. The needles that fall annually from the trees, as well as branches that break and fall to the ground, help enrich and rebuild the soil. They also shade the soils, creating cool moist conditions that are favourable for the establishment of other species. As the trees age (about 20) other trees begin to seed in and grow in the shelter of the conifer trees. As the forest thins by natural processes (e.g. trees dying as a result of insect or disease damage, competition, wind storms) more room becomes available for natural regeneration. Unassisted, this process can take a very long time. Manipulating the plantations through thinning can speed up the process. Thinning allows light to reach the forest floor which encourages germination of seedlings and growth of young trees. Through continued thinning, more natural regeneration is encouraged, eventually resulting in a diverse mixedwood forest, similar to the one that was present when the settlers arrived.

Sources of natural regeneration:

- cherry seeds transported by bird droppings
- ash and maple seed transported by the wind
- oak acorns transported by squirrels

Benefits of thinning:

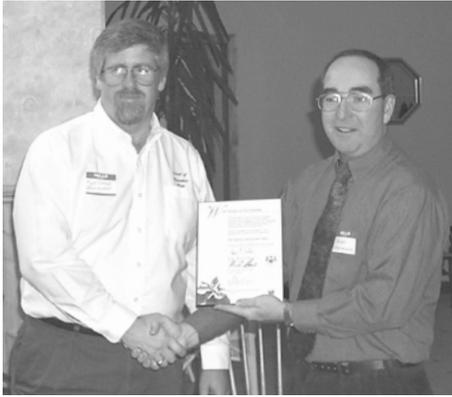
- light reaches the forest floor stimulating germination and growth of young trees
- allows the remaining trees to grow faster than trees in unthinned stands
- increases diversity of tree species present, and with it, the diversity of wildlife habitat

The plantations in the Bonnechere parks are in many different stages of development. Some have reached or surpassed the ideal time for a first thinning, others have already undergone a first thinning and a second thinning would be beneficial to encourage further natural regeneration.

The next time you are walking in a plantation, look carefully between the rows of trees. Compare a thinned and unthinned plantation. Do you see any seedlings growing in the understory? Do you see more seedlings in the openings? Watch where you step – you are walking through our Future Forest!

More information about managing pine plantations and managing regeneration in conifer plantations is available through the Extension Note Series. Extension Notes are available from <http://www.lrconline.com> or by contacting the LandOwner Resource Centre at (613) 692-2390





Brian Pfrimmer, Ontario Parks Central Zone Manager presents FBP Director Ross Taylor (left) with a International Year of the Volunteer.

Ontario Parks Recognizes Friends in the Year of the Volunteer

Ontario Parks recently recognized the contributions of its various Friends organizations as part of the 2001 International Year of the Volunteer. At a luncheon in Wasaga Beach last January, Ontario Parks staff presented several Friends organizations commemorative plaques. Attending on behalf of the FBP, Ross Taylor spoke about the achievements of the past decade and plans for the 35 and 10 celebrations. Congratulations to all our fellow Friends!

Historically Speaking

The following is an excerpt from an article Preston O'Grady of the Bonnechere Valley Museum published last fall in the Eganville Leader reflecting on the unique dialect of the Bonnechere Valley. I thought you would appreciate it.

"If you say you were talking to some of the lads, the folks in Ottawa will know that you are from up the line. If you are invited to sit in, do so and know that you are welcome and a fine meal is before you. Afterwards, when everyone has enjoyed the meal, it's time to red-up the dishes. As you leave, if it's winter time, you may be warned that it's slippy out, but it's a cam night. Should you be lucky enough to go on a sleigh ride, you might be able to pet the horses if they're quite."

Yes, Preston, we understand it all!

FBP LENDING LIBRARY

Thank-You – The FBP lending library has received a great boost. Thanks to a number of my friends and colleagues at the Chalk River Laboratories we have collected two hundred books which will be available for loan to campers and Park visitors this summer. Books can be borrowed free of charge. There is no timeframe for return, but if you do take one away we would appreciate if you return it the next time you are in the Park, or trade one of your books for one of ours. The library is located in the foyer of the Davenport Centre. So plan to spend some of your summer vacation with a book this summer: a sultry romance, a good mystery or a fantastic adventure!

Please – Although we have many adult books to choose from, our children's book selection is quite small, so if you have some you would like to donate, they would be gratefully received. We are also happy to receive more books suitable for adults, young adults and youth. Drop them off at the Davenport Centre, or at the main gate. We are also in need of more board games, card games, dice games and puzzles that can be borrowed for a toonie. When you return the game in tact you get a loonie back. Proceeds are used to support a number of FBP initiatives in the Parks.

You're Welcome – You are welcome to drop into our lending library any time that the Davenport Centre is open to browse, to chat and to borrow. And, of course, you are always welcome to join the FBP and our many activities throughout the summer.

Contributed by Jane Duff

A Note From Mark Stabb

Since the parks of the Little Bonnechere are wonderful places and important protected spaces. It has been a great pleasure working as the Park Planner for this scenic and significant landscape. I have, alas, taken advantage of an opportunity to work on a different program in a location much closer to my Arnprior home. I am now the Program Manager for the Ontario Wetland Habitat Fund, a private land conservation program that is helping to protect and restore habitat for wetland wildlife across Southern and Eastern Ontario. Check out our website at www.wetlandfund.com.

I signed on to the Bonnechere project in part to learn about the park planning process, and I gained a tremendous amount of experience in the year-and-a-half that I was involved. But my underlying reason was to try to help bring the parks of the Little Bonnechere together into a cohesive unit and perhaps move the yardsticks a bit in terms of land and habitat protection in the Ottawa Valley. Now that the planning process is rolling along, I believe the support and interest of the FBP (in particular Jane Duff's fine work on the planning team) will help ensure that the Parks – and Ontario Parks – deliver on their great potential for ecotourism and nature protection. I also believe that the planning process is in good hands with the hiring of the new Park Planner Olesia Van Dyke. Good luck with the plan. I will see some of you in the park again this summer, I am sure.

Contributed by Mark Stabb

Comings and Goings

The more things change, the more things stay the same. We've had a number of staff changes over the winter which means you'll be seeing a number of familiar faces back at the Park this summer. Park Superintendent **Jim Fraser** is on secondment to the Ottawa River Living Legacy Network project operating out of Pembroke District Office, and although his desk has moved, you are sure to run into Jim at the Park this summer.

In Jim's place at Bonnechere Park is Acting Superintendent **Vicki Bradley** who spent seven summers at Bonnechere through the late 1980s and 1990s, and has been at McRae Point and Grundy Lake Provincial Parks for the past three summers. Vicki will be working with Assistant Park Superintendent **Brent Fredrick** who has recently returned to the employ of MNR, and Park Clerk **Shawna Conway-Warren** who is just back from maternity leave. Welcome back Vicki, Brent and Shawna.

2002 Friends Renewal

Once again, Chris Hinsperger of the Bonnechere Caves has donated a family package to the winner of our annual membership drive. We will be making the draw at the September Dig, Pig 'n Jig, so be sure to get your renewal in before September 1, 2002 for your chance to win!

MEMBERSHIPS

Individual (\$10) please indicate new or renewal

Family (\$15) please indicate new or renewal

Memberships benefits for individuals and families include:

- subscription to the Circle of Friends newsletter,
- invitations to Friends' special events, and
- voting rights at the Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Bonnechere Parks.

SUPPORT

We invite you to support the Friends of Bonnechere Parks by giving a donation of your choice or a donation according to one of the following categories:

Annual: \$35 to \$99 Supporting: \$100 to \$149

Donor: \$150 to \$249 Benefactor: \$250 and up

If your donation is an In Memoriam, please print the name of the loved one: _____

Make cheques payable to the Friends of Bonnechere Parks. A tax receipt will be issued for all donations.

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VOLUNTEERS

As a charitable organization, we benefit a great deal from the volunteer efforts of a dedicated group of families, friends and campers who look upon Bonnechere Park as a special place. If you would like to become a part of our group, help out with a special event, or join our Board of Directors, please check the following box(es).

Volunteer

Board of Directors

FRIENDS IN NEED, FRIENDS IN DEED

Established in 1992, The Friends of Bonnechere Parks is a community-based, non-profit, charitable organization. Our mission is to encourage and support programs for interpretive, educational, scientific, historical, protection and preservation purposes related to the natural and cultural heritage of Bonnechere, Bonnechere River and Foy Provincial Parks. The operations of the Friends are authorized by Ontario Parks, and coordinated by a volunteer Board of Directors.

FRIENDS OF BONNECHERE PARKS

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