



MAITLAND MUSINGS

Volume 9, Issue 1

August 2015

LOWER MAITLAND STEWARDSHIP GROUP ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

Rare dragonfly discovered by local naturalists

Lauren Schmuck, Huron Stewardship Council

Katy Perry may have the eye of the tiger, but Huron County has the dragonfly of the tiger, the Tiger Spiketail Dragonfly that is! The rare Tiger Spiketail Dragonfly (*Cordulegaster erronea*) was discovered in Huron County in July of 2014 by Elizabeth Milne, Tom Lobb and Cheryl Davey and it is a significant find!

"We had finished our day in the field and were walking up the hill to our cars when we stumbled upon it", says Elizabeth Milne, a Biologist at Natural Resource Solutions Inc. "It was sitting perfectly still on



Figure 1: The Tiger Spiketail Dragonfly discovered in July 2014. Photo Credit: Cheryl Davey

the ground, I almost stepped on it!" Milne says that the day of the dragonfly's discovery was a particularly cold day in July and as a result, the dragonfly was not moving around very much and was easily identified. The team of naturalists suspected that it was a Tiger Spiketail and knew that this species had never been found in Huron County. The dragonfly was discovered near the Maitland River at Salford. Photos of the dragonfly were taken and sent to Chris Early (Manager of the Arboretum at the University of Guelph), and to Colin Jones (Project Zoologist and Insect Specialist at the Natural Heritage Information Centre at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR)). Early and Jones both agreed that the dragonfly was a Tiger Spiketail. "We have one of only two known breeding sites of Tiger Spiketail in Ontario, and the only photos ever taken in Canada!", says Tom Lobb, who was in the field when the dragonfly was discovered. This species had been found in Norfolk County previous to this discovery, however this was the first discovery in Huron County.

Upon hearing of the exciting find, Colin Jones made the trip from Peterborough to further investigate. A small stream close to where the dragonfly was discovered was searched using a sieve and magnifying glass and several larvae of another dragonfly, known as Delta-spotted Spiketail, were discovered! The Delta-spotted Spiketail dragonfly is also a rare dragonfly species in Ontario and is a new species to Huron County! The discovery of both species is very significant.

The Tiger Spiketail dragonfly has yellow and black stripes along its abdomen, resembling the stripes of a tiger, hence its common name. It grows to be 2.8" – 3.3" long. This species'

habitat is generally restricted to forests near groundwater, it is very unusual to find it in out in open areas. When in their nymph (young) form, Tiger Spiketail Dragonflies feed on aquatic invertebrates and once they reach sexual maturity and enter into their adult form, they begin to feed on flying insects. Females of this species lay their eggs in streams.

There are several key features that can help in the identification of the Tiger Spiketail Dragonfly in the field. For example, it is the only species of Spiketail with yellow bands that wrap around the abdomen – other spiketail dragonflies have rows of spots or triangular marks. In addition, there are two stripes on each thoracic side (mid-section) of the dragonfly, not to be confused with river cruiser dragonflies which have one stripe on each side.

"We have one of only two known breeding sites of Tiger Spiketail in Ontario and the only photos ever taken in Canada." —Tom Lobb

If you are out enjoying nature and you happen to observe a rare species, it is important to report your sighting to the Natural Heritage Information Centre (NHIC). Your observation will help the MNR's efforts to conserve biodiversity in Ontario. If possible, it is great to include a photograph of the species that you are reporting, as well as the GPS coordinates of the location where you found it. You can report your sightings by visiting <http://www.ontario.ca/environment-and-energy/report-rare-species-animals-and-plants>.

Huron County is home to some very healthy and biodiverse ecosystems. What will you discover?



Figure 2: Delta-Spotted Spiketail Dragonfly Nymph. Photo Credit: Cheryl Davey

**Want to receive this newsletter electronically?
Please send your e-mail to:
huronstewardship@gmail.com**

Inside this issue:

LMSG video project—filming underway	2
The Lobb Trail: A Hidden Gem	2
A Giant or an Angel?	3
Shoreline and beach clean up—Sept 12	3

Lower Maitland River video filming is underway

Monica Walker-Bolton, County of Huron

Filming is currently underway for the Lower Maitland Stewardship Group's video project. Now is your chance to become involved with this exciting project that will highlight the beauty of the Lower Maitland River and inspire more people to become stewards of this precious natural area.

On the strength of the LMSG video project proposal, the group was able to secure a total of \$11,000 in funding from the Huron Economic Development Program, The Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh, The Municipality of Central Huron and The Town of Goderich.

Over Yonder Aerial Works has been hired to conduct the video production work. Rob Boyce met with members of the LMSG on June 4th to learn about the group's vision for the video and make plans for filming in the upcoming months.



Rob Boyce (OYAW) filming at the river. Photo by Jory Mullen

Over Yonder Aerial Works (OYAW) specializes in drone photography. The LMSG is excited about the opportunity to work with OYAW to create a video that will highlight the beauty of the Lower Maitland River from the point of view of a bald eagle flying over the river.

We are looking for aspiring actors who wish help highlight the various ways we enjoy the Maitland.

Rob has already collected shots of kayakers paddling the river and plans are underway to film fishing and stewardship work. While the summer weather is here it would be great if volunteers could come forward to act out scenes of **camping, good farm practices, hiking, enjoying the river with children and appreciating nature.**

If you wish to star in the video project please contact Rob Boyce at robboyce67@gmail.com or Monica Walker-Bolton at mwalker-bolton@huroncounty.ca. Groups and individuals of all ages are welcome to participate.

The Lobb Trail: A Hidden Gem

Lauren Schmuck, Huron Stewardship Council

As a newcomer to Huron County, I was recently told to go take a hike! Fortunately, this suggestion was intended to encourage me to get outside and explore the natural beauty of Huron County. While there are many great places to take a hike in Huron County, Lobb Trail is undoubtedly one of the best. Lobb Trail is located at the Lobb Farm and is a small piece of paradise in Huron County.

This scenic trail features approximately seven kilometers of walking trails and a very unique forest ecosystem known as a "Carolinian" forest. Carolinian ecosystems are unique in Ontario because they are at the very northern limit of their range here, with the majority of their range occurring in the eastern United States. Some species of plants and trees grow only in Carolinian forests, including Twinleaf (a herbaceous perennial plant) and Sycamore trees. Both of these species can be seen when taking a hike through Lobb Trail.

"Lobb's Trail is likely the best site to see the rare Green Dragon plant in all of Huron County."

—Tom Lobb

Not only does Lobb Trail give you the opportunity to view this unique ecosystem, it also contains several rare species.

Among these species at risk is American Gromwell, Indian Plantain and Green Dragon, all of which are listed as "Species of Special Concern" under the *Endangered Species Act*. After speaking with Tom Lobb, cousin of Murray Lobb who currently looks after Lobb Trail, Tom informed me that Lobb Trail is likely the best site to see the rare Green Dragon plant in all of Huron County. In addition to rare plants, Lobb Trail is located adjacent the Maitland River which is home to one of Ontario's rarest snakes, the endangered Queensnake. This harmless, non-venomous snake is spends most of its time in the river and is Ontario's most aquatic snake.

In addition to the rare species located in the natural area surrounding Lobb Trail, the property has an interesting history. A portion of the trail is located over an old pottery kiln, which was run by David Burns in the nineteenth century. Burns and his family lived in a cottage on the property. Unfortunately, a fire was started in 1870 when a kerosene lamp was knocked over, and the cottage burned down. The foundation of the old cottage can still be seen on the Trail.

Other activities that are permitted on Lobb Trail include skiing, mountain biking, snowmobiling and snow shoeing. The trail's entrance is located at the intersection of Maitland Line and School House Road and free parking is available at the entrance. Happy hiking!

Have you ever seen a blue crayfish?

To learn more about this rare natural phenomenon, visit the LMSG website at

lmsg.huronstewardship.on.ca

A Giant, or an Angel?

Tom Lobb, Landowner and local Naturalist

Over the last 3 years, I have heard several very worried people say that they saw Giant Hogweed in the Lower Maitland. It is likely that these people heard a warning issued by MNR or a Conservation Authority, or were in a place like the Thames River at London where the plant does exist. What they saw was a similar plant called Angelica. I have never seen Hogweed in the Maitland and I am sure it is not here. I will attempt to show the differences between the two.

Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) looks like a wild carrot on steroids. Its flowering stems can reach **5 m (16')** high and **10 cm (4")** in diameter. At the top is a compound umbel of white flowers that can be up to **120 cm (4')** across. It has a **flat bottom** and **gently rounded top**. Stems are hollow, except at the nodes, and have **conspicuous reddish-purple flecks** throughout. Lower stems often have **sharp-pointed bumps**. In the first year, the plant produces a rosette of compound leaves that can be 1 m high and 1 m across. Each leaf has **3 large, deeply-cut leaflets**, each leaflet with **deep, irregular lobes and coarse, sharp teeth** on all margins. Petioles often have **sharp-pointed bumps**. Hogweed is not a perennial, producing a flower stalk in its second or third year and then dying. It only reproduces by seed. Hogweed was introduced from Europe as an ornamental. It has escaped along roadsides, streambanks, and waste areas. The reason for the warnings is that all parts of the plant contains a yellowish sap that causes severe dermatitis when exposed to sun in susceptible individuals. Effects may include welts, rashes, blistering, and purple scarring that can last up to 6



Giant Hogweed. Source: Google

years. If sap gets in the eyes, it can lead to permanent blindness.

Angelica (*Angelica atropurpurea*) also looks like a huge wild carrot, but is smaller than Hogweed and with some other key differences. Flowering stalks are **1 to 3 m (4 to 10 feet)** tall. They are **smooth, pale to dark purple**, and hollow. At the top are **umbrella-shaped** compound umbels of **white to greenish** flowers up to **30 cm across (12")**. A basal rosette of compound leaves is produced, each with 3 leaflets, but unlike Hogweed, each leaflet is **further divided into 3's or 5's**. The stalks of the leaves on the upper flowering stem have **swollen basal sheaths**. Angelica is native to Eastern North America and is found along streams and in swamps. Early settlers boiled parts of the plant to make into candy. Stalks can be eaten like celery (flavour is similar). For centuries, in Europe, Angelica was considered to be a powerful protective herb against evil spirits, witchcraft, and disease. It was used for heartburn, insomnia, arthritis, to control flatulence, and to improve sex drive! The flowers attract an amazing number of species of flies and small bees to their nectar.



Angelica. Source: U of Michigan

Hogweed is an invasive, so it is possible it could pop up here sometime. It was found in roadsides at Bayfield some years ago and was destroyed, and then again a couple weeks ago. If you find what you really believe to be Hogweed, let me or someone who can do something about it know: i.e. County Weed Inspector, Maitland Valley CA, Central Huron, MNRF. We don't want it ever getting established!

Join us for a Waterfront & Shoreline Clean-up on Sept 12

Karen Alexander, Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation

The Coastal Centre is excited to partner with the Lower Maitland Stewardship Group to organize a Great Goderich Shoreline Clean-up for the Goderich waterfront and the Maitland River Valley on September 12, 2015.

Plastic pollution is emerging as a serious threat to the Great Lakes. All plastic littered across the landscape eventually makes its way to the lake through storm water drains, creeks, streams, and rivers. Once in the lake, plastic floats and can be carried out into the lake, or wash along the shore.

Large plastic litter items can entangle and harm wildlife, carry aquatic species beyond their normal range, and decrease the

aesthetic beauty of the Great Lakes. Small pieces of plastic may be mistakenly ingested by local wildlife causing choking, or if swallowed, malnourishment and / or starvation.

A shoreline clean up is one way to have a direct impact on the health of the Lower Maitland River and the Goderich waterfront.

Volunteers are needed to make this event a success! To register for the clean-up please visit www.shorelinecleanup.ca. For more information, contact Karen Alexander (Karen.alexander@lakehuron.on.ca) or Rachel White (huronstewardship@gmail.com).

WANT TO BECOME MORE INVOLVED IN THE LOWER MAITLAND STEWARDSHIP GROUP?

The Lower Maitland River Valley is a landscape worthy of protection. Surrounded by highly productive agricultural land, the valley is deeply incised and features an intact corridor of forest, numerous natural heritage features for fish and wildlife habitat, woodlands, limestone outcroppings, and many other features of interest. To date, the river valley has been relatively untouched by development.

The Lower Maitland Stewardship Group (LMSG) was formed in 1998 and consists of landowners, stakeholders, organization and agency representatives, and individuals interested in protecting and enhancing the valley and its natural features.

The LMSG holds meetings several times a year and invites interested landowners to come out and join the discussions, help plan outings, and stay informed about happenings in the Valley! Meetings are held at the Tourism office in Goderich on the first Thursday of the month and begin at 3:00pm.

The upcoming meetings are scheduled as follows:

Sept. 3, 2015 • March 3, 2016 • June 2, 2016 • Sept. 1, 2016

Further, if you would like to be receive additional information about LMSG meetings and activities, please send your email to Rachel at: huronstewardship@gmail.com

INTERESTED IN STEWARDSHIP WORK ON YOUR PROPERTY? FUNDING IS AVAILABLE!

Huron Clean Water Project

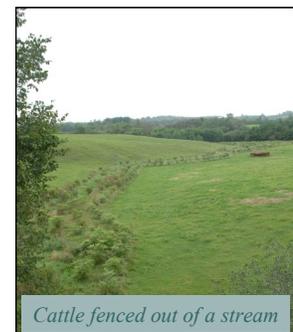
The Huron County Clean Water Project provides financial and technical assistance to county residents to improve and protect water quality in Huron County. The project is funded by the County of Huron and delivered by the Ausable Bayfield and Maitland Valley Conservation Authorities. Funding assistance covers **up to 50% of the costs** of eligible projects and **can be combined with other cost-share programs**.

Keeping bacteria, chemicals, and nutrients out of creeks and rivers protects the health of land, water, and people. The county initiative has provided financial incentives for projects such as windbreak and tree planting, forest management plans and woodlot enhancement, wetland creation, erosion control, stormwater management, fragile land retirement, and community and special projects. See the enclosed brochure for more details!

Huron County residents have completed more than 1,700 projects through the Huron County Clean Water Project.

Contact the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority for more information:

Douglas Hocking, Water Quality Specialist, 519-335-3557 x236; dhocking@mvca.on.ca



Together we can keep the Lower Maitland River's water clean!