

FIELD BOTANISTS of ONTARIO



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NEWSLETTER

Summer 1988

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UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS:

A possible field trip, led by Mac Kirk is planned to Feversham Gorge for some time in mid September. Anyone interested in further details should contact Don Kirk (519)-837-2935 for information.

FIELD BOTANISTS OF ONTARIO - Minutes of the Annual General Meeting Dorset, Ontario, 18 June 1988

The meeting was chaired by FBO President Doug Geddes. He distributed and reviewed the Annual Report, a precis of which follows the Minutes.

Members were reminded that the Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting were distributed with the August 1987 Newsletter.

Regrettably, because of an illness, there was no Treasurer's Report, but the President advised members that the FBO remains solvent. Elizabeth Syrett volunteered to audit the 1987-1988 financial statement and, on a motion, this was approved by the members in attendance.

There have been many good suggestions received from members in response to the field trip questionnaire. One change has been the increased scheduling of Sunday outings.

Membership has increased and is now up to about 250. To encourage new memberships, members were asked to distribute FBO brochures where appropriate.

The Newsletter Committee is on a much better footing now as a result of a request for volunteers and a subsequent meeting at Doug Geddes' house in March. A small grant from Environment Canada is being used towards the purchase of a desk top publishing program to help in the preparation of the newsletter.

The FBO became a rotating member of the Ontario Heritage League Coordinating Committee over the past year. Doug Geddes, who is chairman of the Proposal Review Committee, explained the role and aims of the Ontario Heritage League.

There was considerable interest about the Madawaska Highlands Regional Trust Proposal. Ted Mosquin discussed and explained his involvement in the project.

It was agreed that the next Annual General Meeting will be held on the third or fourth weekend in June, 1989 at Red Bay or Tobermory.

The executive for 1988-1989 were then introduced:

President:	Doug Geddes	**Other members:**
Past-President:	Bob Hounsell	Don Cuddy
Vice-President:	Don Kirk	Dorothy Tiedje
Treasure:	Harry Williams	Kevin Kavanaugh
Secretary:	Judy Hernandez	Ilmay Talvila

It was moved by Elizabeth Syrett, seconded by Michael Oldham that the new executive be approved. Motion was carried.

The chairman then concluded the 1988 Annual General Meeting.

FIELD BOTANISTS OF ONTARIO - 1987/88 ANNUAL REPORT

Doug Geddes (President)

The FBO had a very successful year in 1987/88 in terms of membership, field trip participation, influence of government policy, protection of important natural areas and other achievements.

The following is a brief overview of our activities over the last year.

- **MEMBERSHIP** increased substantially in 1987 as a result of a very active promotion using our membership brochures. Unfortunately our postage is no longer subsidized, so we had to limit our mailing activities somewhat in 1988. It is very expensive to send out quantities of brochures to all our members, but they will be available on request or at meetings.

- The number of **FIELD TRIPS** offered in 1987 increased substantially over previous years and all were well attended and favourably received by attendees. In 1988 the number of field trips increased again and most are still filling to capacity. One trip which was suggested, but never finalized, was to the ROM Herbarium. We will attempt to arrange this during the coming winter.

- Our participation in the **ONTARIO HERITAGE LEAGUE** continues to be of increasing value. The League, established through the cooperation of the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Heritage Foundation of the Ministry of Culture and Communications, is working for the protection of Ontario's Natural Heritage with the participation of all the major naturalist and environmentalist organizations in the province. It is expected that in the next few years the League will play a major part in preservation, education and research of Ontario's Natural Heritage.

In 1988, the FBO President was asked to chair the Proposal Review Committee which reviews all requests for funding, and makes recommendations to the League's executive Coordinating Committee.

It has been proposed that the League should be pro-active by establishing objectives and soliciting proposals in particular key areas. The Proposal Review Committee has suggested pro-active initiatives the three following important areas.

1. The production of a Flora of Ontario and the development of a more general interest flora by habitat. Most Provinces and neighbouring States already have, or are developing such floras. The general interest flora could consist of a series of books, each one covering a specific habitat or region.

2. The revitalization of the "Field Biologists of Ontario". A new, but similar publication would provide articles on a wide variety of biological subjects. Sources might include theses, submitted papers and reports funded by the League or its members.

3. The creation of a natural heritage data base. Such a base might include information produced for the Breeding Bird Atlas, the Rare Vascular Plants of Ontario data base of the National Museum as well as material from other sources. This would provide a wide base of knowledge readily available in one place.

● The FBO financially assisted in the **PURCHASE OF IMPORTANT PROPERTY** in the Peterborough area and the Bruce Peninsula.

● The board decided that **FIELD TRIP LEADERS AND SPEAKERS** who spend considerable time preparing for and attending our meetings, should be reasonably compensated for their time and expenses. Rather than contributing to property purchases, the Board agreed that we should invest in those who have expertise who are willing to pass on their knowledge to the rest of us.

● Our **VICE PRESIDENT** resigned, due to other commitments, leaving us with no one to take over the President's position in the 1988/89 year. As a result, I have agreed to stay on one more year, as allowed by our Constitution.

● One of our biggest successes this year has been the establishment of a **NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE**. They did a superb job of their first edition, on rather short notice. We have been able to obtain a small grant from Environment Canada which will assist us in buying a desktop publishing program to make our newsletters look more professional. Look for the new format in the Fall 1988 newsletter. Newsletters will now appear on a regular basis four times a year and will be 8 pages in length, not including activity notices and registration forms.

● We are working on a new **FBO LOGO**.

● We now have a **TABLETOP DISPLAY** to help promote the FBO.

● A cloudless giant sulphur **BUTTERFLY** seen and photographed on an outing at the Windsor Annual Meeting was the first documented sighting in this country of this southern species. The record was announced in the recently released Toronto Entomological Society Annual Report. A good demonstration that botanists are not narrow minded.

● We attempted to get Environment Canada funding assistance for the development of a **SLIDE AND VIDEO SHOW** on the flora of Ontario. Unfortunately there were only sufficient funds for about 10% of the proposals submitted, so we were unsuccessful - this time.

● We ended the 1987-88 year with over $4,000 in the bank, indicating that we are a financially sound organization even though we have not increased our **MEMBERSHIP FEES** in several years. There may be a small fee increase in the coming year so that we can continue to improve and provide a good newsletter on a regular basis.

FRONTENAC PARK TRIP

It was sunny but cool on May 14 when twelve of us met Don Cuddy at Frontenac Provincial Park for the first FBO outing of 1988. Frontenac, one of eastern Ontario's largest parks, has more than 750 plant species recorded in it so far. This rich diversity of plant life is a result of the variety of habitats found within the park: bog, swamp, rock outcrop, upland forest, beaver pond, cliff and lake.

Don Cuddy, ecologist for the eastern region of the Ministry of Natural Resources and FBO board member, is a friendly, humorous leader. On Saturday he led the group through the central and southern parts of the park, and on Sunday we explored more of the southern section. Don prepared the following summary for the Saturday outing.

Saturday May 14, 1988:

We visited Salmon Lake woods which is rich hardwood stand between Big and Little Salmon Lakes. This rich forest has a large breeding population (20+ pairs) of Cerulean warblers. Among the unusual species of a maple-basswood-butternut-oak-hickory forest the participants were able to view both species of gensing, *Panax quinquefolius* and *P. trifolius*, side by side. A small stand of putty root (*Aplectrum hyemale*) was discovered .. the first record for the park and apparently (Orchids of Ontario, Whiting and Catling, 1985) the first for Frontenac County. The species is very rare in eastern Ontario.

After hiking back from the Salmon Lake woods we took the Arab Lake Gorge nature trail, but nothing too exciting was seen. Showy orchis (*Galearis spectabilis*) was not yet in flower, although toothwort (*Denatria diphylla*) was in peak bloom. Oddly enough, a new species for the park, squirrel corn (*Dicentra canadensis*), was discovered in this well-botanized valley! Dutchman's breeches (*Dicentra cucullaria*) is abundant in Frontenac, especially in the rich hardwoods such as Salmon Lake woods.

Of the 14 violet species recorded in the park, we observed seven in bloom on Saturday: *Viola blanda*, *V. conspersa*, *V. eriocarpa*, *V. pubescens*, *V. rostrata*, *V. selkirkii* and *V. sororia*.

Sunday, May 15, 1988:

Two group members could not stay for the second day, so ten of us travelled the Doe Lake hiking trail with Don. The weather was sunny and pleasant, ovenbirds were calling, and everywhere the vegetation was bursting forth in a show of colour. Along this trail we saw bladdernut (*Staphylea trifolia*) with last year's pods still on.

Altogether it was a great weekend. Thank you, Don, for sharing your time and knowledge so freely with us.

Judy Hernandez

ABANDONED RAILWAYS

Roads go through front yards, whereas railways go through back yards. What we will not allow on our front yards, we abandon without any hesitation at our back. A trip on a railway therefore gives us a different perspective on urban landscapes. This also

extends to natural landscapes. It has been known for some time that railways have served to introduce and perpetuate flora which, although often alien, may sometimes include rare native plants of western prairie affinity.

With the increased abandonment of railways, naturalists have a greater opportunity to explore some of these interesting and historical railway routes. Indeed it is possible now (but not recommended!) to drive from Tweed to Perth or from Sterling to Peterborough on recently torn up rail beds. With the ties and rails removed and a level course the run will be dusty, but the vistas spectacular. Around each corner one is met with a new delight be it swamp, back pasture, fern covered embankment or quiet stream flowing under a trestle.

The importance of these abandoned railroads has not escaped the notice of botanists. In the United States a new organization called "Rails to Trails Conservancy" has been established to promote the preservation of these unique linear open spaces.

In Canada a similar movement is beginning to develop. In the Globe and Mail Report on Business of April 6, 1988, there appeared an article which discussed the Great Western and Grand Trunk rail right-of-way between Cambridge and Lynden. This " 25-Km.-long swath of grass and gravel" has turned out to be a boon to hikers, skiers and naturalists. As FBO member Larry Lamb pointed out to a group of Hamilton Naturalist Club members last fall, this particular railway corridor is also host to a variety of regionally rare prairie plants including little bluestem (*Andropogon scoparius*), big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*) and Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*).

"Railway prairies" are an interesting botanical phenomenon and because of railway abandonment have become threatened and in some places may be lost through land use changes. Many local naturalists' and conservation groups have become interested in preserving their patch of abandoned railway, so it is to hoped that some of them, and in particular the Galt railway prairie, will be left for the enjoyment of future generations of hikers and naturalists.

JOHN ARTHUR RUNNELLS

One of the rewards of botanizing is the knowledge that one tends to get better at it as one gets older. This may help explain the enthusiasm and energy which Art Runnells displayed on group outings such as those of the FBO or the Hamilton Naturalists' Club.

Art's interest in botany expanded on his retirement, some years ago, from Pigott Construction Company where he had worked as an accountant. His pursuit of botany led him on trips all over Ontario, from Pelee Island to the north shore of Lake Superior. By the end of the 1987 field season Art had identified 1642 native and naturalized plant species. He was making good progress on his goal, which, he would explain with a humorous chuckle, was to see all of the native vascular plants of Ontario.

Art Runnells passed away on January 24, 1988.

CAMDEN EAST ALVAR

The word "alvar" describes an area of thin soil over essentially flat limestone rock, with scant, but distinctive vegetation. The term was first used in Ontario by R.E. Buschel (1967, Can. Bot. Assoc. Annual Meeting), but had been applied previously to describe similar features in Europe.

In Ontario such landforms are distributed primarily along the contact line between the Precambrian Canadian Shield and adjacent Ordovician limestone, and in formations associated with the Niagra escarpment. The features themselves are quite extensive, but not all areas support alvar vegetation. The most complete alvar communities occur on Manitoulin Island, Pelee Island and along the contact lines. One important site is Camden East Alvar in Lennox and Addington Counties, about 27 Km. north west of Kingston.

Alvar vegetation communities and the phytogeographic relations of their species were analyzed and discussed in a classic paper by Catling *et al* (1975: Ont. Field Biol. 29(2):1-25) in a detailed study of seven alvars in Ontario including the Camden East Alvar.

Recently David Schesinger, sponsored by the Ontario Heritage Foundation, has completed a preliminary Life Science Inventory Report of the Camden East Alvar Area of Natural and Scientific Interest. The site is provincially significant because of the presence of relic prairie species such as Carolina whitlow grass (*Draba reptans*), long-plumed avens (*Geum triflorum*), Pringle's aster (*Aster pilosus*) and upland white goldenrod (*Solidago ptarmicoides*). A good portion of the area is also relatively undisturbed.

A number of recommendations are made for the site including further study, identification of key properties, landowner stewardship campaigns and implementation of a management strategy.

Camden East Alvar is another on the list of special sites and ANSIs which deserve protection from disturbance, and attention from naturalists' groups.

NEW PARKS

Recently, proposals for a wilderness buffer zone around the Lady Evelyn - Smoothwater Provincial Park near Temagami, were rejected by Natural Resources Minister Vincent Kerrio. At the same time he announced plans for 53 new provincial parks, including three waterway parks in the area south and east of the Lady Evelyn - Smoothwater park.

Waterway parks are a new class of park with the largely cosmetic function of protecting banks of canoeing rivers.

Although most of the proposed new parks and park extensions are in northern Ontario, 21 are located in more densely populated southern, central and eastern regions. Included in these are parks at Komoka in Aylmer District, at Black Creek, Johnston Harbour and Ira Lake in Owen Sound District and at Egan Chutes, Kawartha Highlands and Upper Madawaska River in Bancroft District.

Many of the parks are in quite interesting areas and offer possibilities for future botanical exploration and discoveries.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

FBO field trips and meetings are an excellent opportunity for botanists from all kinds of backgrounds and approaches to the subject to get together and mull over their common interest. Here, in a nutshell, is an example of the utility of having a universal way of naming plants. Yet (quite apart from the perfectly understandable difficulties with grammar, spelling pronunciation and the words themselves) there seems to be a reccurrent problem with understanding the way scientific names are made up and written down.

Since the publication of "Species Plantarum" by Linnaeus in 1753, the naming of plants, in Latin, for international use has been a fundamental task for taxonomists. The scientific names for organisms consist of two parts. The genus, or generic, name (e.g. *Acer*) is followe d by the specific epithet (e.g. *rubrum* as in *Acer rubrum*). Properly no species name is accurate and complete unless it is followed by the name(s) of the author(s). These may be abbreviated (as in "L." for Linnaeus) or written in full (hence *Acer rubrum* L.). Conventions used in plant names are laid out in the "International Code of Botanical Nomenclature known as (in awed tones) "The Code".

In writing, scientific names should always be italicized or underlined. The initial letter of the genus name is always capitalized. All the letters in specific epiphet are small, or lower case, except in special cases where the word is derived from a proper noun. It is much safer, and always correct, to use only lower case letters.

Generic names and specific epithets may be taken from any source or composed arbitrarily, but they are always treated as Latin. Compound names shoul d never be taken from different language roots. Hence "quadrifolium" and "tetraphyllum" are Latin and Greek respectinely for "four leaves". "Quadriphyllum" or "tetrafolium" would be monstrous howlers.

A favourite source of plant names is the names of people. Specific epithets named for people can usually be recognised. They often end in ii if the name ends in a consonant. Naming a new genus or species after a friend, colleague, or the discoverer of the plant is a common way of honouring them. It is unacceptable to name an organism after yourself, so you have to get your friends to do it. Imagine the bryological brotherhood behind the naming of the following mosses!

Sphagnum girgensohnii *Russow*
Sphagnum russowii *Warnstorf*
Sphagnum warnstorfii *Russow*
Sphagnum wulfianum *Girg.*

The essence of understanding, appreciating and remembering scientific names is knowing what they mean. Donald J. Borror's (1960) "Dictionary of Word Roots and Combining Forms", published by Mayfield Publishing Company is an excellent reference. For the more serious student, William T. Stearn's (1973) "Botanical Latin", published by David and Charles and distribute by Lubrecht and Cramer is invaluable, informative and entertaining if such things amuse you.