Woodland PEI

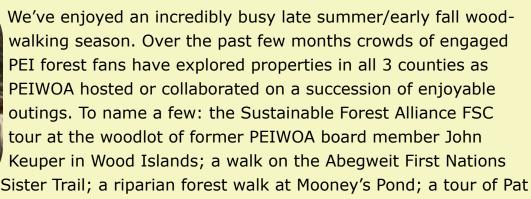
Newsletter of the PEI Woodlot Owners Association



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- Bruce McCallum's Hand-Built Trails
- Emerald Ash Borer- An Update

Editor's Message ..



Binns' award-winning (Woodlot Owner Of The Year) woodlot at Hopefield; and a visit to the first-ever 'Up West Forest Fest ' which included a mushroom hunt at the Kildare Forest Natural Area, a coastal forest walk at Jacques Cartier Provincial Park and a forested wetland walk in Richmond. Pat Binns' woodlot tour has earlier been ably reported on by print and electronic media, including our own social media posts. The other forest walks mentioned above take center stage in this issue of the newsletter, along with a visit to Bruce McCallum's Hunter River area farm for a lesson in low-impact trail-building, and an update on possible changes in the ongoing fight to slow the spread of the potentially devastating emerald ash borer.

Reminders...

Here are two upcoming events for your walking and viewing pleasure:

November 22nd – Ecological Silviculture Walk

On November 22nd, an Ecological Silviculture Walk will be held in collaboration with Island Nature Trust (INT) and the PEI Woodlot Owners Association at the Farmington Woodlands Natural Area in St. Peter's Bay, where the INT forestry team will share onthe-ground insights into ecological silviculture and biodiversity-focused forest management.

December 17th – Vital Forests Film Screening

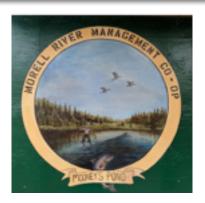
On December 17th at 7:00 p.m., we will be screening Vital Forests – Film Series at the Beaconsfield Carriage House. Created by filmmaker Eric Edwards of the Macphail Woods Ecological Forestry Project, the film showcases stunning footage and expert perspectives from Macphail Woods and FLPP partners, followed by an informal discussion on PEI's coastal, riparian, wetland, and upland forest ecosystems. This event is presented in collaboration with Macphail's Ecological Forestry Project, Nature PEI and the PEI Woodlot Owners Association, and is held in partnership with the Forested Landscape Priority Place Program for Species at Risk.

The Morell River Management Cooperative

.. by Kelsey Boudreau



Kelsey Boudreau is the FLPP Project Coordinator with the PEI Woodlot Owners Association. Originally from Peakes, Kelsey has witnessed firsthand the incredible progress and restoration work carried out at Mooney's Pond—an area that stands as a proud example of PEI's riparian beauty and the richness of its forested landscapes beyond the Island's beaches.



Morell River



Morell River Bounty

The Morell River Management Co-operative has been caring for our watershed for many years. Most of us who grew up in this area already know how special the Morell River system is, and the Morell River Management Co-operative has played a major role in keeping it that way. The Co-operative looks after the Morell River, Midgell River, Marie River, Bristol Creek, Schooner Creek, and the St. Peter's River — all of which are connected and rely on healthy, forested shorelines and cold, clean water.

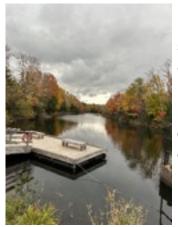
The roots of Morell River Management Co-operative go back to 1972, when people in the community noticed more cottage development beginning along the river. A group came together to ensure the river

would remain natural and protected. Their work led to the creation of the Morell River Green Belt in 1975, which became the first conservation zone on PEI. This protected corridor covers 44 kilometres of river with a 60-metre natural buffer on each side, helping maintain the shaded, wild character of the riverbanks that many of us recognize today.

A key part of Morell River Management's ongoing work focuses on the protection and restoration of riparian buffer zones — the strips of forest that grow alongside rivers and streams. These natural areas help keep water cool, prevent erosion, filter runoff, and support habitat for a wide range of species. While the provincial minimum buffer width is 15 metres, the Morell River system often maintains wider buffers because this watershed supports coldwater fish such as Atlantic salmon, which require cool and clean water to survive.



Fiona damage, Morell River west branch



Mooney's Pond

Mooney's Pond is a place where the benefits of this stewardship can be seen clearly on the ground. Over time, it has become a well-recognized example of community-led habitat restoration. Since joining Morell River Management in 2018, Project Coordinator Hannah Murnaghan has played an important role in guiding stewardship, restoration planning, and community involvement at Mooney's Pond. The continued growth and care of the site reflect her dedication and the long-term work of Morell River Management Co-operative and its partners.

In the years following Hurricane Fiona, Mooney's Pond also showed how natural recovery processes can support the ecosystem when given space. Instead of removing all fallen trees and woody material, leaving

much of it in place has helped improve fish habitat, slow water flow, rebuild spawning gravel, and support natural forest regeneration. Sometimes, working with nature, rather than clearing it away, leads to healthier and more resilient outcomes.

The Morell River Management Corporation's ongoing efforts continue to make a lasting impact on the Morell River watershed. By supporting local landowners, restoring riparian and forest habitats, and promoting sustainable land management, their work strengthens the long-term ecological health of the region. Through collaboration and community engagement, the organization helps ensure that the Morell River system remains a thriving and resilient ecosystem for generations to come.

Key Messages from the Mooney's Pond Walk October 16, 2025

On October 16th, PEIWOA hosted our FLPP Forest Walk at Mooney's Pond with 27 participants. The walk was led by Hannah Murnaghan (Coordinator of the Morell River Management Co- operative), Mary Finch (Watershed Ecologist, Environment, Energy & Climate Action), and Matthew Guindon (Private Forest Technician, Environment, Energy & Climate Action)

Riparian Buffers Protect River Health

Mooney's Pond is managed by the Morell River Management Cooperative, which also

established the Morell River Green Belt — a protected corridor that maintains 60-metre forested buffers on both sides of the river.

These buffers are essential for preventing erosion, filtering runoff, reducing flood impacts, cooling the river for salmon and trout, and supporting wildlife habitat.



Mayfly Nymph

Water Quality and Mayfly Nymph Indicators

A mayfly nymph was observed during the walk. Mayflies require clean, cold, well-oxygenated water, indicating that Mooney's Pond supports a healthy aquatic ecosystem including salmon and trout.



Natural Woody Debris Helps Recovery

Following Hurricane Fiona, not all fallen trees were removed. Leaving woody debris in place slows water flow, reduces erosion, provides habitat for fish and invertebrates, and returns nutrients to the ecosystem. Forests do not need to look 'tidy' to be healthy.

Forest Diversity Builds Resilience

Mooney's Pond features a diverse mix of native tree species including yellow birch, sugar maple, American beech, hemlock, striped maple, elm, and balsam fir. Forest diversity supports storm resilience, disease resistance, and wildlife habitat.

Did You Know? Yellow Birch in Riparian Zones

Yellow birch is an excellent species for riverbanks. Its deep roots stabilize soil and its shade cools the water, benefiting cold-water fish, like salmon and trout.

Thinning Supports Healthy Forest Growth

A nearby white pine plantation from the 1990s (pictured below) has dense canopy competition and limited understory. Selective thinning and introducing other species can restore biodiversity. The Forest Enhancement Program (FEP) offers guidance and financial support for this work.





This walk highlighted the importance of collaboration among landowners, watershed groups, forestry technicians, and community organizations. Through the FLPP program, we continue to support species at risk, restore forest diversity, and strengthen watershed resilience across PEI.

Upwest Forest Fest ...by Julie-Lynn Zahavich

On October 3rd and 4th, Islanders were invited to step into the heart of Western PEI's forests during the inaugural Up West Forest Fest.

The event was organized by the *PEI Forested Landscape Priority Place for Species at Risk* team—a collaboration of several conservation partners, including the PEI Woodlot Owners Association, Lennox Island Natural Resource Department, PEI Forests, Fish and Wildlife Division, Island Nature Trust, Nature PEI, and Macphail Woods Ecological Forestry Project. The festival celebrated the unique features and ecological importance of forests in western PEI, inviting the public to connect with and appreciate these vital natural spaces.

For anyone who couldn't attend or for anyone who wants to relive the magic, we have compiled a recap of the events below.

On October 3rd, the event kicked off with a walk on the Gotjinaiig Otaotioagl / The Path of Our Forefathers Trail in Lennox Island First Nation. The walk was led by Mi'kmaq knowledge keeper and herbalist, Helena Perry, and PEI Forests, Fish and Wildlife Director, Kate MacQuarrie. Helena and Kate shared their knowledge on the various plants

encountered along the trail and wove together both Indigenous knowledge and Western science to make a very enjoyable walk that truly embodied Mi'kmaq Elder Albert Marshall's concept of "two-eyed seeing".



The group learned how porcupine quills are harvested and used to create beautiful traditional art pieces at the Lennox Island Cultural Center



Mi'kmaq knowledge keeper and herbalist Helena Perry, sharing her knowledge on October 3rd in Lennox Island.

After the walk, everyone had a chance to tour the Lennox Island Cultural Centre, where stories, artifacts, and exhibits highlighted the history and traditions of the Mi'kmaq people. The group was also treated to a quill art demonstration and a delicious barbeque provided by Experience Lennox Island.



Daniel MacRae of Ecological Forestry Project discussing coastal planting at Jacques Cartier Provincial Park

On October 4th, there were three additional walks throughout the day. Starting at 10AM at Jacques Cartier Provincial Park, where the PEI Woodlot Owners Association in partnership with Daniel McRae from Macphail Woods hosted a coastal forest walk. Daniel led the group on a walk through the park, sharing some recent work he's done to restore the area with native coastal species and highlighting the importance of making good land use decisions when working in coastal environments.

Next, Nature PEI and Island Nature Trust offered a biodiversity and mushroom walk at the beautiful Kildare Forest Natural Area in Huntley. The group walked the trail which winds through a second growth softwood forest leading to a stand of towering white pines, and discussed the various plants and mushrooms encountered along the way.



Julie-Lynn Zahavich, with Forests, Fish and Wildlife, leading a group through a cedar swamp on a provincial property in Richmond

The last walk of the day took place on Sugar Camp



Rosemary Curley of Nature PEI sharing her knowledge of mushrooms in Kildare Forest Nature Area

Richmond, where staff from the PEI Forests, Fish and Wildlife Division led a group through a cedar swamp situated on a provincial forest property. Cedar swamps are a forest type that is unique to Prince County and are considered uncommon

on PEI. The group discussed the values of forested wetlands, including carbon sequestration, buffering against flooding and storms, and the

habitat they provide to species at risk. After their walk through the swamp, the group had a chance to visit a neighbouring provincial property to see PEI's rarest tree species – the Ironwood!

It was a fantastic couple of days celebrating forests in western PEI. The weather cooperated beautifully and over 75 people in total attended the events. The organizing committee was pleased with how everything went and are already thinking about how to build on this success for next year!

Julie-Lynn Zahavich is a forest conservation specialist with PEI's Forests, Fish and Wildlife division and coordinator of the PEI Forested Landscape Priority Place for Species At Risk (FLPP).

The Hand-Built Trails of Bruce McCallum...D.M.

On a gloriously sunny, warm and calm September afternoon about 30 outdoor enthusiasts gathered in the private woodlot of Bruce McCallum to walk his trails and learn how he created them, with few exceptions, using only hand tools.

Bruce McCallum has a lot of experience with innovative design and procedure, going all the way back to his role in helping to develop PEI's fabled "ARK' project, a technologically pioneering sun and wind-powered home, greenhouse and fish-rearing complex, opened in 1976 on Spry Point. Bruce's 2025 woodlot is, in many ways, a continuation of his lifelong interest in sustainable environmental projects.

The woodlot is situated on Hazel Grove Road, just outside Hunter River, part of a 100-acre farm Bruce and his wife purchased shortly before moving to PEI in 1977. The farm was rented for most of the 20th century and the renters had left the woodlot mostly intact, resulting in a nice mix of uneven-aged hardwoods with a higher percentage of mature trees than most woodlots. During his ownership the woodlot has been actively managed and he thinks that's the main reason his trees were mostly still standing after Fiona while his neighbours place was mostly flattened. In the surrounding area there were typically 80% of trees on the ground, but in his woodlot the damage was closer to 20-25%, "not too bad".



Bruce McCallum tamping down earth on the "Red" trail (note the red marking tape)

About half of Bruce McCallum's farm is comprised of woodland. His guided wood-walk took place mostly in a 15-acre mature hardwood stand. Back in the 80's Bruce laid out \$500 to have a bulldozer brought in to create an extraction trail. Since then he's been constructing trails by hand 'in bits & pieces" and "stitching together" a network of 7 walking and biking trails, extending between 5 & 6 kilometres in total, each trail colour coded with directional signs indicating how to get back to the start. The wood-walk group started walking on "Red" and were treated to a trail tour that included tool demonstrations and helpful tips for making trail building easier and more effective. The return route was on 'Blue". One of the problems facing Bruce recently has been how to flag the trails with tape that reflects their names; most stores go with red tape and that's it.

One of Bruce's guiding strategies has been to find natural pathways that, except for a few shrubs and low spots, the woods have already created. He is always looking for the paths of least resistance,

seeking minimal disturbance of soil and tree growth. He deals with big stubborn stumps by not creating them, avoiding larger trees even if that means detouring the trail around them.

When starting a new trail, his first 'treatment' is usually the removal of balsam fir. He de-limbs the fallen firs but leaves the stumps for a few years until he can kick them over. His favourite tool

for felling and de-limbing fir, and for many other brush clearing chores, is his Swedish brush axe. He finds that the tool is safer and more efficient than an ordinary hatchet and he likes that it is specifically designed to prevent the blade from hitting the ground.

Just about everything you need for a woodlot trail system

The tool is available online at Lee Valley in Halifax, from BAP Equipment in Fredericton and it's also available right here on PEI at Dave's Snowmobile Repair in Cornwall. He also gets a lot of use out of a simple, small pick which is easy to carry and handy for cutting roots or shaping the ground. He uses his pick to loosen the soil then moves soil around with his rake to create a more or less flat pathway. With the pick he also salvages earth from the roots of blow-downs to level low spots or fill in holes.



Bruce McCallum holding his Swedish brush axe. Note the D-frame extensions protecting the blade

Other favourite tools include a handheld tamper, pruners, and a double-edged grass whip.. all tools available at Island suppliers. Aside from the cost of tools, the only expense to his trail building is his labour and his time. He plans to keep building trails, but can't say how many he'll end up with. "I don't know. I don't know how long I'll be here".



Bruce harvests striped maple from his woodlot to make walking sticks



Bridges can be an expensive trail enhancement, **unless** you have access to a shipping pallet



No shortage of uprooted trees on PEI, each with its own bounty of prime topsoil for improving a woodlot trail

The Fight Against Emerald Ash Borer: an Update.. D.M.

There are about 60 species of ash trees known to the world. 16 of those are native to North America and 4 to Canada. Only 2 species are native to PEI; black and white ash. The rare black ash is a relatively small tree fond of stream banks, forested wetlands and swamp edges. Ash is essential to Mi'kmaw artisans who have used the unique structural qualities of its wood to fashion such necessities as canoes, snowshoes, chairs and baskets. The white ash is generally a much larger 'canopy' tree reaching a height of up to 30 metres with a lifespan of up to 200 years. It is more common on PEI than black ash and is found in scattered patches in all three counties. Its straight-grained, hard and strong wood structure is ideal for a wide range of everyday products,

among them; tool handles, furniture, flooring, lobster traps, electric guitar bodies,

chopping boards, baseball bats and hockey sticks.



Adult Emerald Ash Borer

Both native PEI ash species are now in harm's way. Lurking on the threshold of our Island is a metallic green, invasive flying beetle with the proven power to wipe out our few surviving black ash and, within a short time kill most, if not all, of our white ash trees.

The beetle at issue is the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). It is believed to have hitched a ride from East Asia on wood packaging in the 1990's. First recorded in the Detroit/Windsor area in 2002, it has since spread to 30 states and 6 provinces, with isolated pockets in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Thunder Bay and Halifax and widespread

areas of infestation across southern Ontario, southern Quebec and New Brunswick.

Clay Cutting is a technician with the PEI Invasive Species Council (PEIISC), a job that puts him at the forefront of the fight to prevent EAB from hitch-hiking across the Northumberland Strait. He says most of southern Ontario and Quebec are considered infested, as is most of southern New Brunswick. Pockets of infestation around western population centers and a focal infestation in Nova Scotia in the Halifax area clearly show that people are the main movers of EAB and demonstrate how widely people can transport the bug out of its current range.

The regulations aimed at controlling the spread of EAB in Canada are the responsibility of CFIA, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. Those regulations cover such issues as the handling and transportation of ash tree products, tree trimmings, yard waste and firewood. On its website CFIA clearly identifies firewood as the most likely pathway for EAB infestation. "Untreated firewood moved by individual citizens without proper approval from the CFIA is possibly the major cause of emerald ash borer dispersal". It is illegal to transport firewood from an area designated as 'regulated' (i.e. infested) to an area designated as unregulated/un-infested.

Recently the U.S. government removed federal restrictions on the movement of EAB-related products across the entire nation, discarding its EAB regulation status quo and causing Canadian regulators to reassess their own guidelines. The US Department of Agriculture now considers the

continuous 48 states to be an infested area for EAB. Clay Cutting understands the American position to be that further regulation would not inhibit the spread of the infestation and would not be the best use of their resources, which are now directed toward the development of management tools like biological control agents. While the U.S. response to EAB infestation is wholesale deregulation, CFIA is not inclined to follow the American lead. Recognizing the American approach as an option, CFIA is also suggesting 3 other options for control of EAB in the most intensely infested provinces; Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

Option 1: Maintain the status quo, the system which has been in place for the last 20 years, with regulation depending on the presence or absence of EAB and regulated areas expanded based on new detections.

Option 2: Completely regulate the provinces of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, but leave PEI and Newfoundland & Labrador unregulated, as un-infested areas.

Option 3: Regulate all of eastern Canada, including PEI and Newfoundland & Labrador.

Option 4: Completely de-regulate EAB on a national level (mirroring the American policy).

In presenting the above 4 scenarios, CFIA explains on its website that it favours Option 2 which "offers a more stable and predictable regulatory framework for the upcoming years and would enable the CFIA to work with stakeholders and partners, to implement a new strategy for emerald ash borer, with a focus on biocontrol measures, identification and breeding of resistant ash varieties, as well as prevention"

The PEI Invasive Species Council (PEIISC), in consultation with groups like Island Nature Trust, Nature PEI, and the PEI Watershed Alliance, is asking CFIA to adopt a 'hybrid' version of options 1 and 2, whereby there would be province-wide regulation in Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick but not in Nova Scotia. Clay Cutting points out that Nova Scotia is much less infested than New Brunswick, and the Nova Scotia Invasive Species Council (NSISC) wants to maintain the existing county-by-county regulation regime as per CFIA's 'option 1'. PEIISC will be supporting the NSISC proposal.

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PEI Firewood Bin

In New Brunswick, the local Invasive Species Council has taken the position that they don't believe the current county-by-county regulatory measures will be able to slow the spread of the EAB infestation. Accordingly, PEIISC supports completely regulating New Brunswick as an infested place.

The 'hybrid option proposed by the PEIISC would simplify the movement of firewood within New Brunswick and totally ban moving firewood from New Brunswick to PEI and Newfoundland. The same would hold for firewood from Ontario and Quebec. Nova Scotia firewood, an unlikely commodity given transportation costs and a readily available local supply, would only be allowed from unregulated counties.

If EAB were to be regulated for all of Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick it would allow wood to move more freely internationally and inter-provincially. But, in Clay Cutting's view, there may be an

environmental cost to eliminating protections for un-infested areas in these provinces. Protection for un-infested populations of ash in Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick would be decreased and the potential for the expansion of EAB infestation increased overall. As well, the resulting general promotion of EAB spread would likely lead to more EAB in general being on the landscape, which would in turn increase the likelihood of it spreading elsewhere, like PEI.

While provincial and federal officials wrestle with a new EAB regulatory framework, there remain on PEI gaps in the enforcement of the regulations currently in place. There is little screening of firewood, or wood products of any kind, arriving on PEI. There is no monitoring mechanism for the movement of wood products across the Confederation Bridge or at the Wood Islands ferry terminal. Trucks carrying wood products roll through provincial borders largely unexamined. The situation is frustrating for those like Clay Cutting who can easily imagine the potentially devastating effect of a single hitch-hiking bug. However, he expresses some hope that the changing regulatory framework at the federal level might lead to a corresponding adjustment of priorities provincially.

"The first step would be to start actually screening, if not for EAB, then maybe just seeing what sort of wood is on the load and where that wood is coming from. That would be an absolute minimum to get that going. In the future there could potentially be provincial requirements for the treatment of wood products that come onto the Island. But really, documentation would be an absolutely first step, and that's not currently ongoing. We don't know how much wood is coming to PEI, and we really don't know where from, and so learning that would be the absolute first step in the process. But from my discussions in the past with provincial

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"Don't Move Firewood" sign at New Glasgow campground (far right)

regulators there doesn't seem at the time to be a distinct appetite on their end to increase the workload, the amount of screening that's ongoing at the border."

There has been progress recently in building PEI's defence against invasive species infestation. Educational "Don't Move Firewood" signs have been placed near the Confederation Bridge and at the ferry terminal. Bins have been placed in the national park, several provincial parks and at visitor centers in Wood Islands and Borden, where campers can dump any firewood they might be carrying and exchange it for locally sourced wood. The bin contents are delivered to PEI Energy Systems in Charlottetown for incineration, and the bins are screened for invasive pests.

But Clay Cutting notes that EAB is just one of many potential forest invaders. "We stand to lose many species in the future from forest pests, not just white & black ash from EAB. We have also a threat of the eastern hemlock being devastated by the hemlock wooly adelgid. We have oak wilt moving toward PEI targeting northern red oaks, our provincial boreal emblem. So I think it could be certainly time to reassess the way we do things with respect to the movement of firewood into the province. I really encourage anyone who is concerned to contact their local MLA to let them know of their concern because those are really the people that seem to make change happen."

PEIWOA Membership Application

2025 Membership Rates:

One-year PEIWOA membership, ending March 31, 2026 \$	25.00
Two-year membership, ending March 31, 2027	40.00
50% discounted rate for members of PEIFA or NFU,	
ending March 31, 2027	20.00

If you wish to join as a new member, or simply to renew if your current membership has expired, please do so now **by Interac e-transfer** to **peiwoodlotowners@gmail.com**

Be sure to include your <u>current mailing address</u>, the <u>County</u> where your woodlot is located, your <u>e-mail address</u> and your <u>phone</u> number so you don't miss out on any of our communications. Or contact us for an application form (same info).

If you prefer, mail your cheque and above information to: PEI Woodlot Owners Association

PEIWOA.CA

Thank you, Sponsors!!







