

The Friends of Killbear



Presidents' Message

Glen Hester

The Friends of Killbear had another busy year in the park. We were able to hold all of our traditional activities despite all of the rainy weather that persisted throughout most of the summer camping season.

The first event of 2008 was the Maple Syrup Festival day held in April. The weather cooperated that day and this increased the number of visitors compared to 2007. The volunteers from the organization were kept busy making and serving pancakes and maple syrup for those who came out to participate in the program.

During the regular camping season the Friends hosted several events including the Canada Day Pancake Breakfast, Bicycle Rodeo, Art Classes, Wednesday Evening Bedtime Stories for children, Concerts at the Amphitheater, and the Family Barbeque. All of these events were well attended by campers and everyone had a good time participating in them.

The Friends continued to operate the bottle recycling program where beer and liquor bottles placed into our recycling

bins are collected, sorted and then delivered to the local recycling centre. Although this program provides funds for the Friends it is a very labour intensive program that depends on volunteer help to make it work efficiently. Special thanks are given to everyone who helped Jim and Win Rowney this year with sorting bottles and packing the truck for the trips to Parry Sound.

All of us are looking forward to another exciting year at Killbear this summer and hope that the days are sunnier and warmer in 2009. When you visit the park, please be sure to visit the Nature Shoppe and say hello to the staff there as it is where you can meet some of the Board of Directors members.

Our Annual Meeting will be held on May 23, 2009. Any members of the Friends of Killbear may attend the meeting. If you are interested in participating in the organization as a member of the Board of Directors let any of the present members know as we have some

vacancies on the Board.

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to thank Park Superintendent Rick Hornsby for all of his support his past year. He went above and beyond the "call of duty" to help us make this a successful year of events at Killbear. We are also indebted to the maintenance staff of the park who always help us set up the supplies we need for our special events, to the gate staff who help us hand out our flyers, and to Kenton Otterbein and the Natural Heritage Education Staff who assist us with many of our special events. Thank you all for your continued support of the Friends of Killbear.



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Nature Shoppe News

*Carol Cascanette
Store Committee Chair*

The Nature Shoppe was very busy this season. About 36,000 people came into the Visitor Centre over the summer and about 10% made Nature Shoppe purchases. Three students [David, Jessica and Jeff] worked full time during July and August, as well as one full time manager, Kathy Evoy, hired from May until Thanksgiving weekend.

Kathy is an extremely competent person and is back for the third year. She has a feel for the store and was able to take over most of the treasurer's job. Our treasurer Lydia Gardisch, has a huge job and needs a break now and again. We were very lucky to have someone who could do both jobs. Kathy was able to take on this task easily. She is also very interested in new products and has spent much time this winter trying to develop several new items. We will now be able to offer you park "patches" for your favourite trail or campground.

The Nature Shoppe still provides a huge amount of information regarding the park and the surrounding area. We still stock as many field guides as we can and hope that they are helpful to the curious and interested. Along with

books, we sell a small amount of clothing, art, pottery and jewellery. All of the products are locally produced if possible. Remember that all of the profits we make stay with our park. The store is our main responsibility as a group. It makes the most money and enables us to do things that would otherwise be out of the question. It will be the store that makes the new Activity Centre come to life.

We would like to acknowledge again, the huge contribution that Julie Harmgardt made to the Friends of Killbear. Her book, "**Memories of Killbear**" was a sell out and all the profits stayed with the Nature Shoppe. There is going to be a second book which is being worked on now. If anyone wants to contact Julie to donate an article or ask questions or sponsor her, please view her web site...www.scriptreaction.com/killbear or email her at jharmgardt@gmail.com. I feel honoured and privileged to have known this remarkable woman. Thank you Julie and good luck with your wonderful life. As a Friend of Killbear, you went far beyond the call of duty. So look it up, send in a story, have some fun, enjoy, and be a part of the new book.

The Natural Heritage Education Program students were a huge help to us this year, as usual. We helped fund a

research intern working on the Massasauga Rattle Snake Program. They, in turn, volunteered at all of our functions and assisted with anything they could. Hope to see you next year and many, many thanks.

Winter is a beautiful season on the shield. There is nothing like the frozen landscapes to lift the spirit and trigger the creative soul. Sadly, only a few experience winters at Killbear. A screensaver of the area "in the 4 seasons" could help you visualize what it is truly like. Joe Gardisch, a board member, developed an incredible photographic journey through the area on a CD. We sell it as a screen saver. This is the next best thing to being here all year. See it on our monitor in the store.

As the 2009 season arrives, I am excited once again to get the new arrivals, search for new titles and start meeting the new staff. As the chair of the store committee, I would like to thank you for supporting us in all the many ways that you do, from coffee to raffle tickets to your best field guide. I sincerely hope you get your favourite site this summer and that the sun shines on you tent while you're here.

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Park Naturalist Report

Kenton Otterbein
NHE Leader

There was a slight drop in attendance at the Visitor Centre last year as well as at interpretive programs in 2008, perhaps due to the inclement weather. Programs were well received and outstanding staff helped to make the summer a success. Special Events sponsored by the Friends such as the concert by the Wakami Wailers in July and the August concert of Katherine Wheatley and Wendell Ferguson were definite highlights of the summer.

On the Snake Front – 2008 continued a 4 year trend of high number of snake calls on campsites and park roads. Park staff responded to 42 rattlesnake and 26 foxsnake calls during the summer. We successfully relocated 20

rattlesnakes away from campsites and roads last summer. Only one of these relocated snakes was later found killed on a road. Unfortunately we found a total of 16 rattlesnakes and 4 foxsnakes dead on park interior or boundary roads. The worst spot was the intersection of 559 and Pengally Bay Road with 5 dead rattlesnakes found within 200 m of that corner.

The snake fence was extended by 440 metres near the entrance of the park and it appears that the number of rattlesnakes killed along this section has been reduced dramatically (9 deaths in 2005, 2006 prior to the fence being built compared to 3 deaths in the two years since the fence was built). Continuing the fence a further 200 m this summer will hopefully further decrease the number of deaths along this section of road.

The Friends of Killbear received a grant of \$5000 from the Ministry of Natural Resources Species at Risk Fund to pay for rattlesnake surveys at hibernation and gestation sites during the spring, summer and fall. The results were very encouraging with 47 rattlesnakes captured or photographed (to minimize disturbance 4 pregnant adult females were not captured but only photographed). Together with the snakes captured as a result of the summer snake calls, park staff processed 65 individual rattlesnakes in 2008. Thanks go to Megan Ritzie, the lead searcher in the fall while Ruth Lindenburger, Glenda Clayton and Rob Willson assisted in the spring and summer.

	Total captures	Initial Captures			Recaptures			Photographed		
		Babies (photo)	Juveniles (photo)	Adults (pit tagged)	Babies	Juveniles	Adults	Babies	Juvenile	Adults
Spring	13			12			1			
Summer	12	1		1			5		1	4
Fall	22	13	4	2		1	2			
Sub totals	47	14	4	15		1	8		1	4
	47	33			9			5		