



# WHEATLEY RIVER WATERSHED NEWS

## SHIFTING SEASONS

Following another busy summer, it's a welcome change to slow down a bit and enjoy the autumn season. We wrapped up another successful and productive few months, and there's no doubt that winter is on its way. In this edition of the ***Wheatley River Watershed News***, we're sharing an update on the floodplain reconnection project and a recap on other summer season work, as well as a look ahead at upcoming events.

### IN THIS ISSUE

Floodplain Reconnection .....	2
Summer Season Highlights .....	3
Tree Caging Red Oaks .....	4
Upcoming Events .....	5
Contact, Sponsors & Membership .....	6

### FALL FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENT

We're excited to share that our "Community Pond Wildlife Viewing Improvement Project" has received \$5000 from the PEI Wildlife Conservation Fund!

This project will revitalize the gathering area at Rackham's Pond by replacing the aging, overgrown, and flood-prone viewing platform with a raised, covered structure. The new structure will be built in collaboration with high-school students and will offer a welcoming place to enjoy nature while reducing disturbance to sensitive habitats.



PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND  
**WILDLIFE**  
CONSERVATION FUND

# PROJECT RECAP: FLOODPLAIN RECONNECTION



In August, we undertook a major project to reconnect the Wheatley River to its floodplain just above Rackham's Pond. This is an area where we have focused much attention over the years because of the legacy impacts from historical damming. Over time, the river above the pond has become entrenched, cutting it off from its floodplain and decreasing wetland habitat. Even during high-flow events, the river cannot breach its steep banks, causing bank erosion. The resulting sediment then moves downstream, eventually settling in the pond.

In 2009, then again in 2022, accumulated sediment was removed to regain pond depth. Despite our best efforts to mitigate erosion, the pond continues to fill with sediment.

Our goal for the floodplain reconnection project is to break the sediment infill-removal cycle by allowing sediment to move more naturally through the waterway. Re-graded riverbanks have created a gentler slope on the inside of the bend. This allows the river to flow more easily over its banks during high-water events and has a



BEFORE



AFTER

slowing effect on the water. That allows more of the in-stream sediment to settle in the floodplain area, rather than in the pond. It also helps to reduce pressure on the opposite bank to mitigate further bank erosion.

The site has now been replanted with native vegetation, and rock armouring has been added to stabilize the inside bank. We look forward to monitoring project impact on the health of the system and sharing results with our partners over time.

**WRIG gratefully acknowledges Fisheries and Oceans Canada for funding this project. Thanks also to the Rackham family and the PEI Watershed Alliance for their support of this important initiative.**

## SUMMER SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

We had an exciting and productive summer thanks to our excellent field crew, consisting of: Sarah MacWilliams, Bailey Chapman, Maddy MacLeod, and Heidi Wheeler. We are grateful to have received student wage funding from the Skills PEI post-secondary student program, and the Canada Summer Jobs program, as well as summer project funding from the Wildlife Conservation Fund.



The WRIG crew planted, watered and maintained over **700 native trees & shrubs** in riparian & upland areas in the watershed in 2025!



WRIG also donated red oak trees during the Canada Day event in North Rustico and during our annual river duck race fundraiser in August.



The WRIG crew removed an incredible **1030 kg** of invasive plant material (mainly bittersweet nightshade) from several areas that were blocked up with this matting plant.



# Wildlife on the Wheatley



WRIG's first annual group paddle event was a great success! On September 20<sup>th</sup>, a group of 10 paddlers set out from the Wheatley River bridge, led by wildlife expert Matt Ginn from PEI's Forests, Fish & Wildlife. We were so lucky to have such a (nearly) effortless paddle and finished up near Oyster Bed Bridge causeway about 2 hours later. Matt pointed out various bird species including: Canada geese, cormorants, kingfishers, herons, teals, eagles, blue jays and ducks. Thank you Matt and we look forward to doing this again next year!



## TREE CAGING FOR RED OAKS



This year we trialed about a dozen tree cages on young red oaks in an area where they were likely to get choked out or lost in the long grasses. Tree cages are recommended for any young deciduous tree, especially if planted in long vegetation or in a remote area where they could get neglected.

Tree caging is used to protect newly planted trees during their most vulnerable stage of growth. Young trees are easily damaged by snowshoe hares or small rodents, which may chew on tender bark and branches. Cages also shield the trunks from accidental harm caused by lawn equipment and help prevent wind or foot-traffic damage.



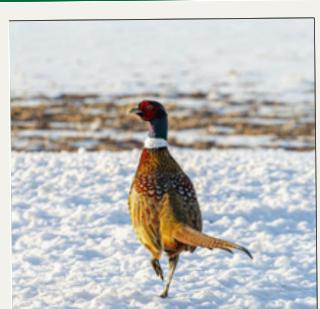
## UPCOMING EVENTS

### THE JOHN SYLVESTER MEMORIAL

# PHOTO *Contest*

We are honoured to name the annual photo contest in memory of longtime WRIG supporter and member John Sylvester who graciously served as judge of the contest for the past 10 years!

Help showcase the natural beauty of our watershed by submitting your entries via email to: [manager@wheatleyriver.ca](mailto:manager@wheatleyriver.ca) by: February 1, 2026



Chandler Martin  
wildlife category  
winner 2025



Carl Doucette  
landscape category  
winner 2025



### 2026 WINTER WOODLOT TOUR

Funding has been secured and planning is underway for the 2026 Winter Woodlot Tour! Follow us on social media for event announcements including date, location, and other details.



WRIG thanks the Wildlife Conservation Fund for their continued support and for funding this annual community event!

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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 Office: 2184 Church Road, Rustico

 [The Wheatley River Improvement Group](#)  
 [@wheatleyriverimprovementgroup](#)

### A Special Thanks to WRIG's 2025-26 Board of Directors:

Renée Pastoor - Chairperson  
 Jennifer Gallé - Secretary  
 Hailey Blacquiere - Treasurer  
 Peter McDougall  
 Matthew Tennyson  
 Melissa Boudreau  
 Stephen Loo  
 Ben Versteeg  
 Craig Ling

## CORPORATE SPONSORS & FUNDING SOURCES

- Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
- Blue Bay Farms Ltd.
- Canada Summer Jobs Program
- Clean Foundation Internship Program
- Conseil Acadien de Rustico
- Creekfield Homeowner's Association
- Cymbria Lions Club
- D & B Developments
- Fisheries & Oceans Canada
- Gallant's Country Food Market
- Island Honey Wine Company
- Lingdale Farms
- Maritime Electric
- Oyster Bed Esso
- PEI Jobs for Youth Program
- PEI Watershed Alliance
- PEI Watershed Management Fund
- PEI Wildlife Conservation Fund
- Rackham Electric
- Red Oak Farms
- River's Edge Enterprises
- Shady Grove Carpentry Ltd.
- Skills PEI Student Funding

## WHEATLEY RIVER IMPROVEMENT GROUP 2026 MEMBERSHIP

Would you like to be a part of restoring and protecting our watershed? This is your chance to help; join or renew your WRIG membership! All proceeds and donations go directly back into the community as we work to preserve and enhance the quality of the environment in the watershed.

Sponsor: \$100.00  
 Group: \$ 50.00  
 Family: \$ 20.00  
 Individual: \$ 10.00

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Add to WRIG's email list? YES  NO

Amount enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

[The membership form is also available online here](#)

Please mail the completed form and payment (cash or cheque) to:

**2184 Church Road Hunter River,  
 PE, C0A 1N0**

Or send an e-transfer to:

**[manager@wheatleyriver.ca](mailto:manager@wheatleyriver.ca)**

**Thank you for your support!**

