



FRIENDS of Laurier Woods

SPRING BULLETIN 2020

Hey folks, the birds are returning. Great time to visit the woods, early in the day or the evening and fill your feeders.



2020

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Want to get Involved? There are currently spots available on the Board of Directors.

www.laurierwoods.com

Friends of Laurier Woods is the proud host of www.foresttalkradio.ca

North Bay Stays Healthy

It would be difficult to create a bulletin at this time without addressing the issue of Covid-19. It appears that so far North Bay and the surrounding district are doing well, with few cases reported. There is a new phrase in use now – social distancing. This seems to be an oxymoron since it is difficult to be social and be apart. The Woods are open & many North Bayites are taking advantage of this wonderful spot for a nature break. Luckily visitors to Laurier Woods are respecting the request to **keep a distance of 2 metres** between themselves & other visitors who they might encounter along the trails. The trails are narrow but there are options available making distancing easier when approaching others, step off the trail or backtrack to a more open area and walk alone or in a small group.

It makes sense to **carry a facemask** with you, simply drape it around your neck so it is handy to pull on if you encounter others. Make sure that **whatever you bring into the woods**, cans, lunch bags, wrappers etc., **you take out**. Our directors regularly clean up along the trails, and often wear gloves, but in the event they come into contact with garbage that might be contaminated with the virus they could become infected. Be diligent, and thank you all for helping us keep Laurier Woods a healthy and wonderful escape from household confinement.

Unfortunately it has been necessary to **postpone** our 2020 Annual General Meeting & May guided walks. **When this virus is behind us, Laurier Woods will be eagerly waiting to host all its regular seasonal events including guided walks, the Nature Festival, Walks for Charity & joining with you to share its natural beauty.** Watch for updates on our website www.laurierwoods.com and/or our Facebook page.

“Michael’s Boardwalk”

The NBMCA has completed construction of a new 180-foot bridge at the end of the (1 km) purple trail across the pond and marsh area near the Old Callander Road. The boardwalk, named in memory of Michael Gauthier who died accidentally while on an outdoor trip in September 2018, is the result of Michael’s family & friends wanting to honour Michael, his passion for the outdoors and especially Laurier Woods. Michael & his wife, Samantha, hiked the trails daily creating many memories there. They even had their wedding photos taken in Laurier Woods. The NBMCA worked in partnership with Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry to ensure the bridge construction did not threaten two species-at-risk, the Blanding’s turtle and the Gypsy Cuckoo bumblebee, and would respect the natural beauty of the area. The new bridge is comprised of 11 cribs, filled with river-stone, supporting the structure. These cribs were constructed on the ice this past winter and sunk into the pond when the ice cleared. Where this bridge meets the southern side of the pond, the Friends of Laurier Woods and Conservation Authority are clearing a hiking trail to complete a loop with the existing purple trail. An interpretive sign about the environmental benefits of Laurier Woods and the significance of the



boardwalk will be erected this spring.

Michael’s friends and family, as well as local contractors and suppliers who contributed to the construction of the boardwalk, gathered on March 2nd to participate in the final stages of construction and to celebrate the life of this young man. Plans for an official opening of Michael’s Boardwalk will be scheduled following the lifting of restrictions set by Covid-19. Bridge and single Swallow photos courtesy of Kaye Edmonds

Barn Swallow “Condo” to be Erected in Laurier Woods



Nesting photo of Paul Smylie

The Nipissing Naturalists have applied for funds to construct, erect & monitor Barn Swallow nesting structures in Laurier Woods.

The Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) is a medium-sized songbird between 15 & 18 cm in length. It has distinctive colouration: steely, iridescent blue back & tail plumage; light brown to rust-coloured belly; & a chestnut-coloured throat & forehead. Their long forked tail, pointed wings & streamlined bodies make their fast, acrobatic flight possible. The majority of Barn Swallows nest in man-made structures.

Barn Swallows can live in small colonies of around 10 pairs nesting together. The Barn Swallow is listed as a Species at Risk, & as such its habitat is protected under Ontario’s Endangered Species Act. The project will generate data to determine if the nesting structures are used by the birds and could serve as alternative nesting opportunities for them. Anyone interested in assisting with the project may contact Paul Smylie, psmylie1@hotmail.com



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