



2023 Photo Contest: Grand Prize Winner!
Blue Jay by Misty Bernard

The South Shore in 2023

The 2023 field season was full of good times, hard work, and soggy waders. We would like to start with a shout-out to the amazing crew we had the privilege of working with this past summer. Nicole Lawlor, Keiran Wood, Ashton Winn, Catherine Viger, Ian MacNevin, Mel Gibbons, and Romy Munkres, all worked together toward a common goal of improving our south shore ecosystems for the benefit of both wildlife and humans.

For this past season, we pointed our focus toward the DeSable River watershed. We worked from the estuary to the headwaters restoring salmonid habitat and the riparian zone, and studying the area. This upcoming season we are planning to make final adjustments to DeSable and begin work on the Westmoreland River Watershed.

We can't believe it's been five years already since we last combed over Westmoreland's streams, time flies when you're out having a blast in nature. If you own land in the Westmoreland Watershed, specifically land with a watercourse on it, we will be reaching out to you soon! We want to thank those

who have previously permitted us to access your properties, without you we can't complete our work making our watersheds a better place for wildlife and humans alike.

Citizen Science on the South Shore

As a member of your local community, you have a unique opportunity to contribute to the understanding and conservation of our natural environment through citizen science. Citizen science involves ordinary people like you actively participating in scientific research, monitoring, and data collection. It's a collaborative effort between scientists and volunteers, and it plays a crucial role in advancing scientific knowledge and addressing environmental challenges. One of the key aspects of citizen science is its accessibility. You don't need to be a trained scientist to get involved. All you need is curiosity, enthusiasm, and a willingness to learn. By engaging in citizen science initiatives, we can deepen our connection to the natural world and make meaningful contributions to scientific research right in our own backyard. One platform that has revolutionized citizen science is iNaturalist. It is a free mobile app and website that allows users to record their observations of plants and animals, share them with a community of experts and fellow enthusiasts, and contribute to scientific research and conservation efforts.

Whether you're an avid birder, a budding botanist, or simply someone who enjoys spending time outdoors, iNaturalist provides a platform for you to document the biodiversity of our watershed and contribute valuable data to ongoing research projects. By participating in citizen science initiatives like iNaturalist, we can help scientists monitor changes in biodiversity, track the spread of invasive species, and identify habitat hotspots that

are critical for conservation. Our collective observations can provide researchers with valuable data that would be impossible to gather on their own, ultimately leading to a better understanding of our local ecosystem and informing conservation strategies to protect it for future generations.

Moreover, citizen science offers more than just scientific benefits. It fosters a sense of community and shared stewardship of our natural resources. By working together towards a common goal, we can strengthen our connections with one another and with the environment we call home.



INVASIVE SPECIES BITTERSWEET NIGHTSHADE

So, how can you get involved in citizen science? It's simple! Download the iNaturalist app, head outside, and start observing. Whether you're taking a leisurely stroll along a nature trail, tending to your garden, or exploring a nearby park, every observation counts. By documenting the plants and animals you encounter and sharing your observations with the iNaturalist community, you can become a citizen scientist and make a positive impact on our understanding of the natural world.

Together, let's explore, discover, and protect the rich biodiversity of our watershed through the power of citizen science.

Trail Cam Wildlife Monitoring

In our ongoing efforts to understand and protect the natural treasures of the Island's South Shore watersheds, we continually seek innovative tools and methods to monitor wildlife activity and ecosystem health. One such tool that has proven invaluable to our endeavours is the trail camera.

Trail cameras, also known as game cameras or wildlife cameras, are compact, motion-activated devices equipped with a high-resolution lens and infrared technology. These cameras are strategically placed in various locations throughout our watershed to capture images and videos of wildlife in their natural habitat, providing us with valuable insights into the biodiversity and ecological dynamics of our region.



COYOTE (CANIS LATRANS)

So, why are trail cameras particularly helpful to watershed groups like ours on PEI's South Shore?

Trail cameras serve as our eyes in the wilderness, allowing us to observe wildlife behaviour without disturbing or intruding upon their natural habitats. This non-invasive monitoring approach is essential for studying elusive and nocturnal species, such as foxes, coyotes, and owls.

Furthermore, trail cameras provide us with a unique opportunity to document the presence and movements of species that may be of conservation concern. By analyzing the data collected from these cameras, we can identify wildlife corridors, habitat preferences, and potential threats to sensitive species, enabling us to develop informed conservation strategies to protect our region's biodiversity.

In addition to their scientific value, trail cameras also have educational and outreach benefits. The captivating images and videos captured by these

cameras offer a glimpse into the hidden world of wildlife, sparking curiosity and fostering a deeper appreciation for the natural wonders of our watershed. We utilize these visual resources in educational programs, public presentations, and outreach events to engage our community and inspire conservation action.

As stewards of the South Shore watershed, we are committed to leveraging technology and innovation to better understand and safeguard our natural heritage. Trail cameras are just one of the many tools at our disposal, but their impact is profound, helping us unravel the mysteries of our watershed and empower our community to become active participants in its conservation.

Join the Watershed Community!



We want to express our gratitude to everyone who has contributed to the success of the South Shore Watershed Association. Whether you have volunteered your time, made a donation, or simply supported our work, you have helped us make a positive impact on our environment and our community.

We look forward to working with you in the coming year and beyond as we continue to protect and enhance the natural resources of our watershed.



PEI 2 Billion Trees!

Would you like to start a biodiverse forest on your property, create a wildlife corridor or protect your bank from erosion? Look no further than the PEI 2 Billion Trees program to get you started!

This program, run by our provincial Forests, Fish and Wildlife Division, offers free tree seedlings and planting labour if you meet the following: Afforestation planting (we do not underplant in existing woodlands in this program). You must accept a minimum of 50 trees. The trees are spaced close together, on average 2.4m apart. At windier sites it may be best to plant even closer, such as 2m (we don't landscape plant with them). There are currently six tree species available: White Spruce (*picea glauca*) White Pine (*pinus strobus*); Eastern Hemlock (*tsuga canadensis*), White Birch (*betula papyrifera*); Yellow Birch (*betula alleghaniensis*); and Red Maple (*acer rubrum*).

Planting will begin in the spring of 2025 and will continue for a total of six planting years up until 2031. Each year the goal is to plant approximately 300,000 trees! Applying is easy. It can be done over the phone or online at this provincial webpage: PEI - 2 Billion Trees Landowner Application. Expect a response within 4-6 weeks, followed by a scheduled field visit to assess your property. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to reach out: PEI 2 Billion Trees Coordinator, Hailey Blacquiere (hdblacquiere@gov.pe.ca) or PEI Watershed Alliance 2 Billion Trees Coordinator, Cassidy Matheson (peiwaprogramcoordinator@gmail.com or 902-940-9239)

Let's grow together for a greener tomorrow!

SSWA'S WATERSHEDS



-  DeSable River
-  Westmoreland River
-  Tryon River
-  Augustine Cove-Cape Traverse
-  Seven Mile Bay

More maps: www.sswa.ca

THANKS SO MUCH TO THE FOLLOWING CORPORATE AND MAJOR DONORS (2023-2024)

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And for **all other donations** made to SSWA – so greatly appreciated.

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Membership fee \$ 10.00
 Donation \$ _____
 TOTAL \$ _____

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE SOUTH SHORE WATERSHED ASSOCIATION!

 **SSWA issues charitable tax receipts for donations of \$20 or more**
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