

# TETC NEWSLETTER



Fall 2011



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## Flooding in Torbay

by Robbie Hicks

Media reports have described recent climate changes attributed to global warming. Last year's hurricane Igor, which caused so much devastation in Newfoundland, was considered a once-in-20 years event. We are told that we may expect up to 14 such storms this season. If this proves to be true, it will be evidence of a dramatic change in our weather patterns. This summer certainly has given us more rain, drizzle, and fog than many of us can remember ever experiencing.

How does this impact us here in Torbay? We were fortunate to have escaped the brunt of Igor, but some of us are noticing episodes of flooding unrelated to Igor. While we do not have flood plains, such as in Canada's West, where they have had catastrophic flooding this spring and summer, we do have new housing developments where land clearing has changed run-off patterns and caused flooding down stream. As well, newer homes are experiencing wet basements because of either construction in proximity to swampy patches or where the water table level is high, or both.

One insurance company has responded to this by sending its clients the following as part of an enclosure in their policy renewal package: "*Water is the most common cause of home damage today - this is*

*due to a number of factors. Climate changes have had significant impact and weather events that, at one time, might occur once every 20 years are now happening on an annual basis. Also, some urban expansion has outpaced existing drainage and sewage infrastructures. In response to these increasing water damage losses and in an effort to maintain some stability in the pricing of home policies, you will see a change...."* I think we can add to that the effects on well water quality and levels, and on septic systems.

I received a detailed response from our Mayor Codner when I asked about these issues. He assured me that "modern day developments and general flow patterns for ditches are designed by professional engineers who use current criteria in their design that is established over many decades." Clearly, the Town of Torbay exercises due diligence when planning new developments by consulting these professionals. However, it may be that the established practices of professional engineers are no longer adequate for dealing with current conditions of both increased rainfall and increased development in Torbay.

In a recent Public Town Council meeting (August 8, 2011) Councilor Smith suggested calling on outside resources, with more up-to-date

## **Flooding in Torbay**

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information and practices, to look at the issue of flooding in Torbay. She was supported by other councilors, one of who mentioned newer technology now available for septic systems. This is a positive step on the part of our Town Council, and TETC looks forward to hearing more about these efforts.

The residents of Torbay are one of these resources. Many of you have lived here all your lives and have seen changes in flooding patterns. Some of you have recently moved into our newer developments and are experiencing flooding yourselves. By sharing your knowledge with Council you will be adding valuable data based on real experience. Contact information for the Mayor and Councilors is available on the Town of Torbay web site, [www.torbay.ca](http://www.torbay.ca).

## **The Great Horned Owls of Gosse's Pond**

Pictured below, on the quiet shores of Gosse's Pond, is a pair of immature Great Horned Owls, commonly called 'Branchers'. At this stage, the parents are providing care while the fledglings hang out near their nest, get to know their world, the prey they need to survive, and the skills needed to find it. This is a very sensitive time in the fledgling process and human disturbance in the area can put their future at risk. The parents can be very aggressive with humans who come close to their young - adult Great Horned Owls have been called 'winged tigers' when defending their young. If disturbed, there is also a strong possibility that the adults will not return to feed the young and will eventually abandon them. Great Horned Owls in our back yard! - another reason why Gosse's Pond is so special!



In our last newsletter, we told you about Gosse's Pond, our little gem of a wetland just off Bauline Line and the proposed subdivision to be built on the uplands adjacent to the protected buffer zone. The public consultation on the rezoning amendment took place in June and over 70 letters were sent in, both in favour and against the development. The town is now waiting for the go-ahead from the Department of Municipal Affairs to hold formal public hearings on the development, the last phase in the approval process. Notice of the public hearings will be advertised in the Telegram and on the Town's web site. Please take the time to voice your opinion on the future of this pristine area, the last completely undeveloped pond in Torbay. For more information, email TETC or contact Lee Harvey at 437-7116.

## Students on Ice 2011 Arctic Expedition from Iceland to Greenland to Labrador

by Michael Gardiner

What can I say about this trip? It was incredible! I was fortunate enough to sail from Iceland with a group of 120 students and 40 education staff. The education staff ranged from botanists and explorers to professional activists to songwriters, including playwrights, authors, and sponsors. On this trip I saw some of the most beautiful scenery on earth - fjords, glaciers, blue whales, seals and yes, even polar bears! I met students from Hong Kong, America and all over Canada who were interested in climate change. I also got to meet a few cultural activists. I met many Inuit who were trying to connect the importance of preserving the environment to ensure the survival of their culture. Every place we went had this feeling of openness and cleanness, like freedom and adventure all wrapped into one. I asked David Fletcher, a marine biologist who spent most of his life in Greenland "Does this feeling ever get old?" He said back "Cities get old, this is timeless."

As we wandered around the North I learned a lot about Inuit culture, the art of story telling and more about the science of the earth than I had ever learned in school. Someone from the staff asked me to talk

about what was different about learning in this environment. I said "when they teach you about rocks and the ocean you tend to forget all the words and soon you forget their meanings, but when they teach you about the glacier you're sitting under and the mountain you've just climbed, you remember the story and the science." To me that was the biggest thing, as they put it we were "students in the greatest classroom on earth."

I'd like to end off this article with one of the happiest stories from the trip. When we woke up after crossing the Labrador Sea the announcer on the PA said we are now entering what some consider to be the most beautiful landscape on earth, Newfoundland and Labrador, and it's Torngat mountains. This was where we learned all about Arctic plant species and yes, where we saw our first polar bears!

If I could leave one message with any one reading this, it would be to remember that the Arctic isn't this far away land. In fact it's a part of where we live and that, as Canadians, the great white north is a part of who we are.



Michael Gardiner on the Students on Ice 2011 Arctic Expedition

## HTES ArtsSmarts Program



ArtsSmarts is a national program designed to promote active participation of students in the arts through school-based projects. Holy Trinity Elementary School (HTES) has been a frequent participant in this worthwhile program. Because of its proximity to the school, the Gully wetland has been used by the school as a source of inspiration for the students' artwork many times in the past. The works of art created over the years are displayed throughout the school for everyone to admire.

For the first time in several years, TETC is pleased to be able to offer interpretive field trips to the Gully for the students participating in this year's ArtsSmarts Program. TETC has partnered with the town to hire a trip facilitator for 20 field trips to the Gully involving all kindergarten classes and all grades 3 and 4 classes. Environmental educator Rebecca Smyth, past member of one of the Gully Project's Green Teams, has been busy introducing our school's budding artists to the rich flora and fauna of the Gully wetland. Look for the results in a few weeks' time.

## Congratulations!

TETC extends sincere congratulations to two teachers at Holy Trinity High School (HTHS) who recently received the Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence for 2010-2011, Darla O'Reilly and Glenn Normore.

Darla O'Reilly is well-known to TETC members. She has long been a friend of our group and strong supporter of all things environmental. She was a founding member of the Steering Committee for the Gully Project and throughout the years, helped coordinate student participation in a multitude of environmental activities organized and promoted by TETC. Thanks to her leadership and inspiration, the Friends of the Gully group was created and continues to foster a strong environmental ethic in our students. As a direct result of Darla's efforts, HTHS and the FOG group have been honoured with several awards.

## Property Beautification Awards

Twenty-one years is a mighty long time. That's how long TETC, the Town, and Traverse Gardens have partnered to promote and present the Traverse Gardens/Town of Torbay Property Beautification Awards. This year, in spite of our poor summer, there were 14 beautiful properties for the judges to consider. The 2011 winners were:

<p><b>Overall Winner</b></p> <p>Lee Harvey and Dawn Stack Bauline Line</p>	<p><b>Mature Property</b></p> <p>Winner: Tara and Terry Power Indian Meal Line</p> <p>Honorable Mention: Marian Bradbury Morris Avenue</p>	<p><b>Vegetable Garden</b></p> <p>Winner: Edgar Thomas Patrick's Path</p>
<p><b>Naturalized Garden</b></p> <p>Winner: Fran Cumby Coppertop Place</p> <p>Honorable Mention: Susan and John Boulos Garden Road</p>	<p><b>Small Lot Garden</b></p> <p>Winner: Rose and Byron Barter Patrick's Path</p> <p>Honorable Mention: Linda and Justin Green Riverdale Drive</p>	<p><b>Beginner Garden (property &lt;5yrs)</b></p> <p>Winner: Donna Chiasson Barron's Lane</p> <p>Honorable Mention: Robert Harris Forest River Road</p>

## Voices from the Land Workshop

On September 23 to 24, 2011, three members of TETC and a number of teachers from the Eastern School District attended the “Voices from the Land” workshop hosted by the Nature Conservancy of Canada. The workshop provides an opportunity to explore and celebrate language, art, and the natural world.

Participants were grouped in teams of three. The teams

spent time in the Gully creating art from natural materials and later used the experience to create poetry. The artwork and the poetry produced will be published by the NCC in a full-colour book of art and poetry. Our thanks to Doug Ballam for this incredible and fun experience.

We would like to share with you the poems written by our members and their teams.

### *Unity*

We began  
Separate  
Alone  
Disconnected  
One

One person, one flower,  
can we become one?

Where to find unity  
in all this diversity?

One  
Plus one  
Plus one more

Gathering:  
Purple Aster, Goldenrod, Pearly Everlasting, Rose hips  
with thorns, Butter and Eggs, brown withered Alders,  
Iris leaves, tie one bouquet

One becomes many,  
Many becomes one

More beauty in the whole  
Than the separate alone

Diversity, Humanity, Unity,  
Connected,  
As One

by Yvonne Dawe (Bishops School), Anne Murphy  
(Bishops School), Lee Harvey (TETC)

### *Reflections on the Juniper*

Thick, green, creeping juniper

*See me*

Strong, rooted in the rocky soil where I grow

*Touch me*

Fresh and scented

*Smell me*

My heart and soul survive the seasons

*Love me!*

Chain link cutting through the tall, yellow grass

*Shame*

Barbed wire, cold and hard against the grey sky

*Watch out*

Skittles, slushies, tarps, nerds, monster, caught,  
choking, soiling, spoiling

*Help me*

Humans disrespecting nature

*Tut, tut!*

Nature sustains us,

inspires us,

protects us,

survives us!

by Paula Coughlan (HTES), Shirley Thorne (TETC),  
Madeleine Florent (TETC)

## Christmas 2011 - Birth of a New Tradition

As the holidays approach, the giant Asian factories are kicking into high gear to provide Canadians with monstrous piles of cheaply produced goods - merchandise that has been produced at the expense of Canadian labour. This year will be different. This year Canadians will give the gift of genuine concern for other Canadians. There is no longer an excuse that, at gift giving time, nothing can be found that is produced by Canadian hands. Yes there is!

It's time to think outside the box, people. Who says a gift needs to fit in a shirt box, wrapped in Chinese produced wrapping paper? Everyone - yes EVERYONE gets their hair cut. How about gift certificates from your local hair salon or barber? Gym membership? It's appropriate for all ages who are thinking about some health improvement. There are lots of owner-run restaurants - all offering gift certificates. And if your intended isn't the fancy eatery sort, what about a half dozen breakfasts at the local breakfast joint. Remember, folks this isn't about big National chains - this is about supporting your home town Canadians with their financial lives on the line to keep their doors open.

Who wouldn't appreciate getting their car detailed? Small, Canadian owned detail shops and car washes would love to sell you a gift certificate or a book of gift certificates. Perhaps someone would like their driveway sealed, or lawn mowed for the summer, or driveway plowed all winter, or games at the local golf course. How many people could use an oil change for their car, truck or motorcycle? How many people have a computer that could use a tune-up?

Thinking about a heartfelt gift for Mom? Mom would LOVE the services of a local cleaning lady for a day....or a massage....or a manicure or pedicure. Older citizens would appreciate gift certificates from the local grocery store or pharmacy, or gift baskets filled with canned meats, peanut butter, or herbal teas. If you are looking for something more personal, local crafts people spin their own wool and knit it into scarves. They make jewelry and pottery and beautiful wooden boxes.

Honestly, people, do you REALLY need to buy another ten thousand Chinese lights for the house? When you buy a five dollar string of lights, about fifty cents stays in the community. If you have those kinds of bucks to burn, leave the mailman, trash guy, or baby-sitter a nice BIG tip. You see, Christmas is no longer about draining Canadian pockets so that China can build another city. Instead it's about caring about US, encouraging Canadian small businesses to keep plugging away to follow their dreams. And, when we care about other Canadians, we care about our communities, and the benefits come back to us in ways we couldn't imagine. THIS is the new Canadian Christmas tradition.

## Torbay Tree Day



The TETC held its second "Torbay Tree Day" in June. Once again we were able to get tree seedlings from the Department of Natural Resources forestry section. Many people came to the Kinsmen Community Centre to take trees to plant on their own property. This year some trees were planted in pots in order to be raised to a bigger size before planting in public places. It is helpful to grow the trees to a size where they are less vulnerable to competition and shade from grasses or other vegetation. It also helps to reduce the chance that they will be inadvertently mowed.

Besides being attractive, trees provide us with many benefits such as shelter, privacy, wildlife habitat, and a carbon sink to help mitigate climate change. Many trees are being removed to make way for homes and roads in Torbay and if we want to keep our community green then it will help to plant trees and other plants. It sometimes take a few years for new trees to get established, but once they get growing they can grow fast and they are a great investment for the future.

## East Coast Trail Association Tely Hike 2011



On Saturday June 4, 2011 the Town of Torbay put on a great party in support of the East Coast Trail Association (ECTA) who held their 11th East Coast Trail Tely Hike in Torbay. The Tely Hike is a fundraising event - raising much needed money for the development and maintenance of this wonderful trail that passes right through our community.

For this year's tely hike the weather was great and 325 hikers registered for the event. Between them they raised \$27,185. Members of TETC formed a team and since our section of the trail was newly upgraded we wanted to show our appreciation by making it our goal to raise more money than any other team. And we did! Between us we raised \$3,452 for the East Coast Trail Association. We would like to thank everyone who sponsored our team and also the Town of Torbay for being such good hosts. And let's not forget to thank the East Coast Trail Association for all their tremendous work in pulling the trail together. If you haven't checked out the East Coast Trail you are missing something great. It has to be one of the world's best hiking trails. For more information go to [www.eastcoasttrail.ca](http://www.eastcoasttrail.ca).

## Recycling - Donations Still Accepted!



Curbside recycling is alive and well in Torbay! A big THANK YOU to Council and staff for taking this giant step toward making Torbay a more environmentally responsible town. So far, participation rates are very encouraging.

TETC would like to remind all residents that we are still accepting donations of the recyclable beverage containers. These donations help TETC fund projects that benefit our community such as the field trips to the Gully for HTES students enrolled in this year's ArtsSmarts program. Beverage containers can be dropped off in our blue box behind the Town Hall. Remember, we only accept 'ready-to-drink' beverage containers for which you pay a deposit at the store. ALL OTHER RECYCLABLES must be placed at the curbside as usual on the appointed day.

Rather than dropping off your recyclables in our blue box behind the Town Hall, you can deliver them directly to the Ever Green Depot on Torbay Road and ask that our account be credited. The Depot is located at 858-860 Torbay Road and their hours of operation are:

Tuesday, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm  
 Wednesday to Friday, 9:00 am - 4:00 pm  
 Saturday, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

Phone: 758-5350



By the way, we're told that traffic at the Ever Green Depot has dropped off recently and staff wanted us to let you know that they are a little lonely! Pass the word around!

A final note - our volunteers would like to remind residents that our blue box is not for regular garbage - please help make the sorting job easier and more pleasant for us. **NO GARBAGE PLEASE!!!!!!**

## TETC Hikes



TETC continues to have family friendly hikes although not as frequently as we used to. We now hike seasonally and try to make it more of an event. Our next hike will be our Christmas Hike and Social on Sunday December 4th. Due to the unpredictability of our weather we haven't determined the location/destination of our hike. A day or two prior we will post the hike location on our Facebook page and our website, as well as send out a mass email to those on our email list. After the hike everyone is welcome to attend our Christmas Pot-Luck Social at the home of Erwin and Sylvia Warkentin, located at 35 Byrnes Lane. If you're not up to hiking and just want to come for the social, that's fine too. For more information contact Sylvia at 437-5601.

How to contact us:

- Our email address is: [torbayetc@gmail.com](mailto:torbayetc@gmail.com)
- Our website is: [www.torbay-enviro.ca](http://www.torbay-enviro.ca)
- Join the TETC group on Facebook.

Get added to our email list by sending your request to [sylvia@docwarkentin.ca](mailto:sylvia@docwarkentin.ca)

## Torbay Rock Garden

In 2009 a sub-committee of TETC was formed to give local gardeners the opportunity to develop a hands on project known as the Torbay Rock Garden. This garden is located on the cliff face off Torbay Road, north of Manning's Hill. In the past few years volunteers have done cleanups, grass cutting, and flower and shrub planting in the area known as the 'twin' rivers.

At a recent meeting of TETC, all agreed to give priority to this project and advance it further by having a topographical survey done and hiring a consultant to do a conceptual design for the garden. The survey has already been done and a professional firm is now completing the design work.

Next spring it is the Committee's hope that this project will be seen as a major beautification benefit to our Town. If anyone is interested in helping in any way, volunteers are very welcome. Only a few committed hours a month between May and September are all that is needed. Your time and help would be really appreciated. Please contact TETC at [torbayetc@gmail.com](mailto:torbayetc@gmail.com).

## What is TETC?

Torbay Environment and Trails Committee (TETC) is an advisory committee to the Torbay council and a group of 'greenish' enthusiasts. TETC usually meets on the first Thursday of each month at 8:15 pm downstairs at the Kinsmen Community Centre on Bauline Line. We also have family hikes and other events throughout the year. Meetings, hikes, and events are open to all. We'd love to welcome you!

The TETC executive members are:

- Chairperson - Sylvia Warkentin
- Vice-Chairperson - Helen Spencer
- Treasurers - Madeleine Florent and Shirley Thorne
- Secretary - Position Vacant



To find out more about us or to keep up with what's happening, check out our webpage [www.torbay-enviro.ca](http://www.torbay-enviro.ca) or join the TETC group on Facebook or drop us a line at [torbayetc@gmail.com](mailto:torbayetc@gmail.com). We'd love to hear from you.