

May
2026



Bloodroot photo Ian Barker

What's inside?

- p.2 • PECFN Members' Meeting, Bloomfield Town Hall, 7pm, Tues. May 26
Joe Dale & Lesa Berec: The South Shore Footpath
- p.3. • PECFN's new Board Member Cedric Ste-Amour
• Swift Watch Volunteers needed
- p.4 • Spring Birding Festival May 8-10
- p.5 • Investigative/Environmental Journalism, 7pm, Picton Library Thurs. May 7
- p.6 • Native Plant Sale Sat. May 30, 10 am, Picton Armoury SQ.
- p. 7 • Members' Sightings, Ian Barker
- p. 8 • Pt. Traverse Bird and Plant Walk, Mon. May 11

- p.9-12 • Prince Edward Fern Challenge

- p. 13 • Members' Night, June 30

**PECFN MEMBERS' MEETING, BLOOMFIELD TOWN HALL
7 pm, Tuesday, May 26, 2026**

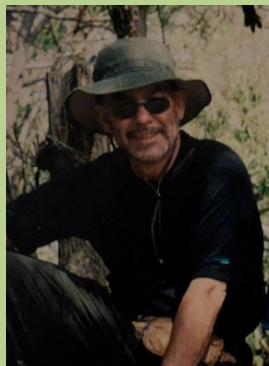
Joe Dale and Lesa Berek: Combining Wellbeing and Conservation: The South Shore Footpath

This presentation explores the startling health benefits of being in nature and the remarkable connection between human health and our willingness to protect nature.

Learn about how health suffers when people rarely get outside into natural settings, the latest research on the mental, physical, and social benefits of being in nature, and how doctors are responding as they increasingly recognize the benefits of time outdoors.

Also learn how connecting people to nature for their health is one of the most effective ways to build public support for planet-friendly policies.

Joe Dale has been volunteering with SSJI since 2021 and currently helps out on the SSJI Footpath project. Joe loves all things outdoors from gardening to wilderness canoeing. He is also an avid hiker.



Finally, learn SSJI's vision for the South Shore Footpath, a public outdoor space where wellbeing and nature conservation go hand in hand. The project is already sparking conversations about health, recreation, and conservation in the County. Join the conversation!



Photo credit: Lesa Berek

Lesa Berek works with the Footpath Project on community outreach, helping to increase awareness of the project and its benefits for both conservation and community health.



Free event. Everyone is welcome.

PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY FIELD NATURALISTS

PECFN's New Board Member Cedric St-Amour

Cedric is a treaty person belonging to the Northeast Lake Ontario Shoreline watershed. While currently working in landscape design in Bloomfield, he is transitioning his career from architecture to nature conservation to put his passion for land-based learning and community building to good use. He joins the PECFN board excited to support our shared goals and cooperatively promote our responsibility "to live in conscious connection with the land and living things in a way that creates and sustains balance." (Alex Wilson, 2018. "Skirting the Issues," 167)



Volunteers needed for SwiftWatch 2026

Please help us count Swifts!

Prince Edward County is very lucky to have a population of Chimney Swifts who reside in County chimneys every summer, travelling from their wintering grounds in South America. Chimney Swifts are aerial foragers who feed on up to a 1000 insects a day and are a **Species at Risk in Ontario**. They originally nested in hollow trees of the old growth forest and with the clearcutting of them, adapted to human-built structures: pre 1960s chimneys and rarely, old barns.

Since 2012 PECFN has participated in **Birds Canada's SwiftWatch** which monitors local Chimney Swift populations across their Canadian range over four evenings in late May and early June. An evening of **SwiftWatch** involves standing by a chimney and counting swifts as they enter and exit it.

This year's Swiftwatch will take place **Wednesday, May 20, Sunday, May 24, Thursday, May 28 and Monday, June 1.**

We gather in the parking lot just south of the **Picton Town Hall, 2 Ross Street at 7pm.**

This is a great opportunity to learn more about these mysterious and remarkable birds, whom you hear before you see, while collecting data to ensure their survival.

If you wish to participate, please contact Amy Bodman at amy.bodman@gmail.com.

Newcomers are encouraged!



Photo: Ian K. Barker



Chimney Swift Photo: George L. Armistead

PRINCE EDWARD POINT BIRD OBSERVATORY'S

May 8th -10th

2026 SPRING BIRDING FESTIVAL

Shared Skies, Shared Stories

MAY 8th - 10th
Prince Edward Point, ON
www.PEPTBO.ca/SBF



PRINCE EDWARD POINT BIRD OBSERVATORY'S

2026 SPRING BIRDING FESTIVAL

Long Flights & Deep Dives:
Investigative and Environmental Journalism



with Elaine Anselmi,
Ontario Bureau Chief, The Narwhal

Thursday, May 7th @ 7pm
Picton Library - Flex Space



www.peptbo.ca/sbf



NATIVE PLANT SALE



SATURDAY 30 MAY 2026
10AM-2PM AT ARMOURY SQ, PICTON



Members' Sightings



Blue-winged Teal
male
photo Ian Barker



Blue-winged Teal female
photo Ian Barker



Bloodroot closed
photo Ian Barker

PECFN Bird and Plant Walk at Pt. Traverse Woods Trail

Monday, May 11, 8am.

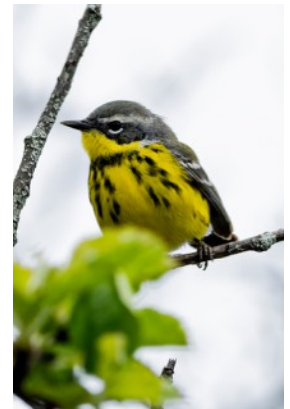
Come join PECFN board members Amy Bodman and Sheila Kuja for a leisurely meander through the Pt. Traverse woods as we look for migrating birds and spring wildflowers.

Please park at the parking area at the entrance of the Pt Traverse Woods trail, along County Rd 13 before the big turn towards the Banding Station (approximately one km further away). We will meet at the sign for the trail.

Please RSVP to Amy Bodman at amy.bodman@gmail.com



Dutchman's -breeches
photo by Donald McClure



Magnolia Warbler
photo S. Smith

Are you up to the Prince Edward Fern challenge? Read more!

Cape Vasey Falls, Prince Edward. The Prince Edward Fern Challenge began here, a spectacular place with moisture and limestone.



The Prince Edward Fern Challenge

Paul Catling, Brenda Kostiuk, Sheila McKay-Kuja, and Allen Kuja

We recently helped to create a current list of the ferns of Prince Edward (Oldham *et al.* 2026). However, we had to exclude reports of four species: *Asplenium rhizophyllum*, *Homalosorus pycnocarpos*, *Phegopteris connectilis*, and *P. hexagonoptera*, due to incomplete documentation. By that we mean that we do not know if they are really here. We have briefly discussed these including five others that we think may occur in the County.

Since searching for something new is exciting, especially if you find it, we extend the **Prince Edward Fern Challenge** to naturalists in the County. The objective is to discover any, or all, of these species. The accompanying illustrations and text will enable observers to be familiar with the plants and we have indicated habitats. For woodland species, the springs at the south end of Macaulay Mountain ravine and Beaver Meadow Conservation Area are good places to look. The species that occur on limestone rocks and cliffs might be found along the cliffs on the shore along Long Point Road at Little Bluff, Point Traverse Woods and at South Bay. There is also some limestone rock at Massasauga Conservation Area and Macaulay Mountain. Examine cliffs with binoculars from below, (not above for obvious reasons). Note that some fern-like plants such as Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*) differ from ferns in being very hairy but the spore cases of ferns on the underside of the leaves area a giveaway.

For more information about ferns see Sessa (2024), ... or any of the older fern guides. The common and scientific names here are taken from VASCAN, where synonymy is provided. Let us know what you find and we will provide an update in the fall to let you know what was discovered.

Walking Fern (*Asplenium rhizophyllum*)

This fern usually occurs on limestone rock in thick moss in cool, shaded places. A new plant may be produced at the tip of the long attenuate leaf. Plants extend over the surface of the rock connected by the leaf tips as though they are walking. The spore cases on the underside of the leaf have an irregular linear shape. It occurs in limestone areas north of the County in Hastings.

Northern Beech fern (*Phegopteris connectilis*)

This fern is often found on damp, shady rocks, cliffs, and in cool forests. It is often found in cooler sites than Broad Beech Fern. The frond is slender and often describes as "tear-shaped", while Southern Beech Fern is broadly triangular. The lowest pair of leaflets (pinnae) point strongly downward (reflexed) and out of the plane of the leaf often with the shape of a moustache.

Broad Beech Fern (*Phegopteris. hexagonoptera*)

A species of rich, moist woods with a relatively warm microclimate, this fern is seen less often as one travels further north. The basal pinnae spread horizontally or descend slightly, and the frond is broadly triangular.

Steller's Rockbrake (*Cryptogramma stelleri*)

Also called Celery fern, this fern has leaves that are more reminiscent of a celery leaf than a fern. They come in two kinds. A broad infertile frond (without spores underneath), and a fertile frond (with spores under the infolded leaf margin). This fern is usually found in semi-shaded moist cracks and ledges of vertical cliffs.

Wallrue Spleenwort (*Asplenium ruta-muraria*)

This small fern has fronds 3-9 cm long with toothed triangular pinnae. It occurs 100 km north and northwest of Prince Edward in the Bancroft and Rideau Lakes areas. It is most likely to be found in cracks of limestone rock. Small size results in it being easily overlooked. It is generally rare and extremely local in Ontario with most occurrences on the Bruce Peninsula and Manitoulin Island.



Narrow-leaved Glade Fern (*Homalosorus pycnocarpus*)

Fronds pinnate (once cut) and up to 80 cm long. The sterile fronds are similar to the evergreen Christmas fern, but are much more delicate and the pinnae (frond divisions) do not have a lobe. Fertile fronds have characteristic linear aggregations of spores. Habitat is deep, rich moist woods and ravines. Yes, the genus name suggests a dinosaur!

Purple-stemmed Cliff Brake (*Pellaea atropurpurea*)

Found in drier parts of rocky limestone outcrops. This plant is rare in Ontario. It usually has two kinds of leaves (dimorphic), the sterile fronds with broad, flat pinnules, the fertile fronds with narrower pinnae inrolled on the undersurface to protect the spores. The long, upright stems are hairy.

Smooth Cliff Brake (*Pellaea glabella subsp. glabella*)

Crevices of dry, sometimes partially shaded limestone cliffs are the habitat. Often, the cliff-faces where it occurs are high, steep and dangerous. The bluish-green leaves blend in with the grey rock. All of the fronds are similar (monomorphic) and the stem is smooth or has a few spreading hairs.

Blunt-lobed Woodsia (*Physematium obtusum subsp. obtusum*); (synonym *Woodsia obtusa*)

Found 80 km northwest of the County at Westport, this endangered fern may be overlooked because of its similarity to Fragile Fern. Blunt-lobed Woodsia has deeply and narrowly lobed, and saucer-shaped indusia (protective coverings around the spore cases) and a stem with glandular hairs, unlike the common Fragile Fern which has the indusia cup-shaped or hood-shaped, unlobed, and attached on the side toward the midrib, and a smooth stem. The stems are yellow. There is no articulation (abscission layer) near the stem base as in Rusty Woodsia (*Woodsia ilvensis*).

References

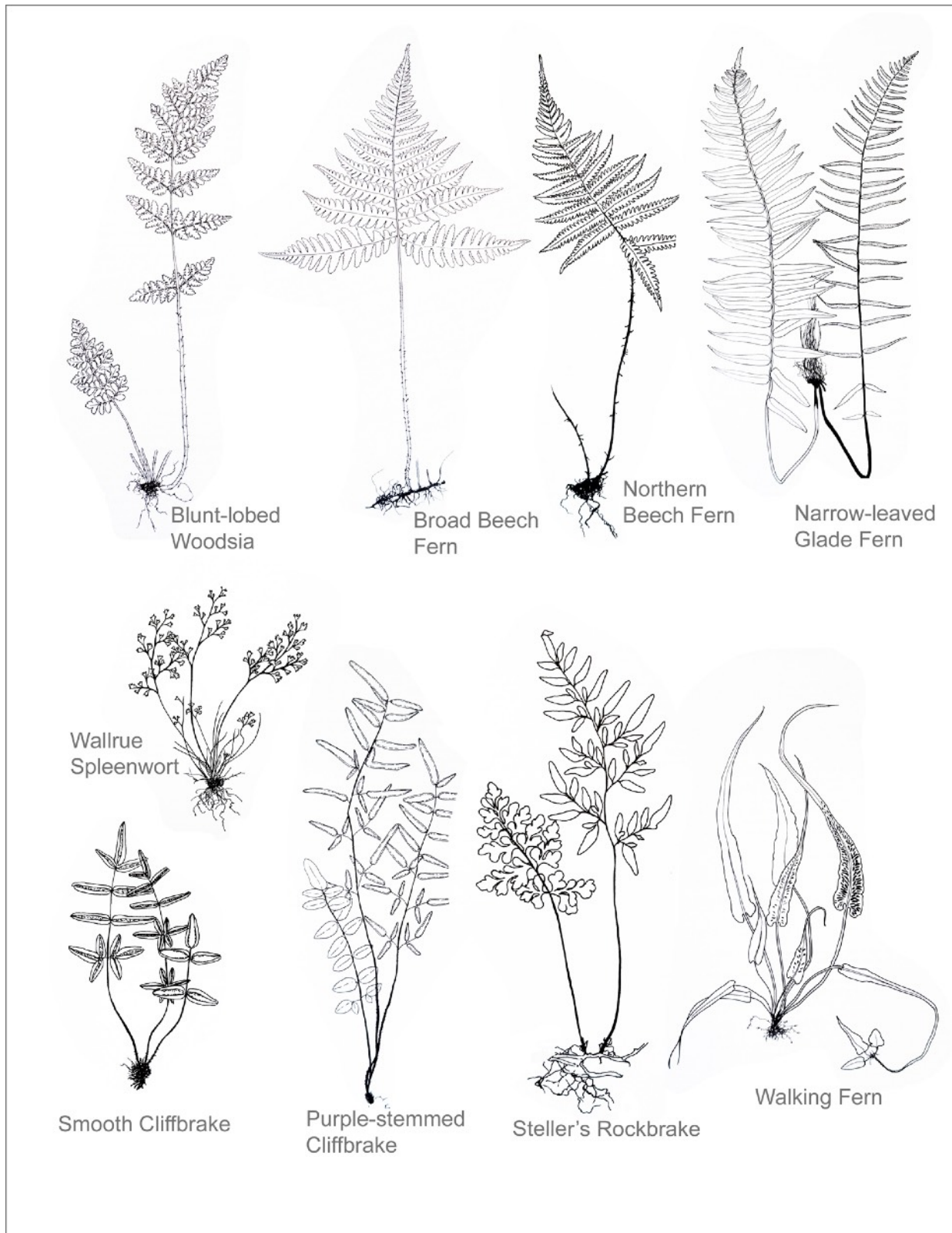
M.J. Oldham, M.J., P.M. Catling, S.M. McKay-Kuja, B. Kostiuk, A. Kuja. 2026. Rare Wild Plants of Prince Edward County – Part 1 - Ferns and Fern Allies, and Gymnosperms. Ontario Plant Press (Newsletter of the Field Botanists of Ontario). In press.

Sessa, E.B. 2024. Ferns, spikemosses, clubmosses and quillworts of Eastern North America. Princeton University Press. Princeton, New Jersey. 527 pp.



This is not a fern but a flowering plant called Herb Robert, ... and one of the commonest woodland plants in the County.. Photos by Sheila McKay-Kuja, on waterfall day - 4 April 2026.

Pec possible ferns



Members' Night and Potluck

Tuesday June 30, 6pm

Members please bring a dessert or salad to be shared , as well as cutlery, plate, napkin and cup.



Three 15 minute presentations by PECFN members on Members' Night:

- **Trumpeter Swans by Dale Smith:** “The return of the Trumpeter Swans is one of Ontario's greatest wildlife comeback stories. Once completely gone from Ontario, this magnificent bird has made an extraordinary recovery thanks to decades of conservation work, volunteers, and community support.”
- **Trip to Gull Island by David Bree:** Join former Park Naturalist David Bree on a virtual tour of Gull Island. While just 100 meters offshore this barren island is a different world from Presqu'île proper. Closed to the public in spring and summer, it is a breeding ground for thousands of waterbirds. In autumn it is a welcome stopping spot for shorebirds but you will have to wade over to see them. This quick trip will be dry and introduce you to these and other aspects of the island.
- **Natural Core Area, Demorestville by Sheila Kuja:** This NCA contains a number of significant, well known natural areas including the largest contiguous forest (approx. 1000 ha) in OMNR Site Region 6E-15 (which extends from west of Kingston to Trenton), i.e. the Candidate Provincially Significant Green Point Escarpment Forest ANSI, as well as the Provincially Significant Fish Lake Wetland and Big Island Provincially significant Wetland. The Hamilton Wetland is also within this core area. Terry Sprague lead a PECFN outing to this wetland several years ago. The plants and animals present in each of these sites will be highlighted in a short slide show.