Minutes
Friends of Presqu'ile Park
37th Annual General Meeting
June 7, 2025

The Chair called the meeting of the Friends of Presqu'ile Park to order by welcoming the attendees. The parliamentarian confirmed we met the quorum requirement of 15 members to conduct business, as 39 members were present. The Chair recognized the traditional keepers of this land and specifically our neighbours of the Alderville First Nation, with formal territorial acknowledgement.

Agenda

The Chair reviewed the agenda and asked for acceptance or amendments. Moved to accept the agenda by Phil McRae, seconded by Brent Barnes - **carried**.

Opening Comments - Terry Buchkowsky, Chair

The Chair welcomed attendees and thanked them for coming out today. We trust that this General Meeting will be informative to you. This is the Friend's 37th Anniversary. Thirty-seven years of providing volunteer assistance for Park activities, providing funding for selected projects, promoting the objectives of the Park and the Friends in the local area. I would say that is a pretty good track record for this organization and one to be proud of.

We started the year with six Board of Directors, which is three short of a full Board. We appointed one person to our Board in January as Director of Operations and another in May as our Corporate Secretary. We have our Treasurer, Linda, stepping down as her second term expires today. Thus, another Board position becomes open.

We have posted the Treasurer's opportunity on Face Book and on our website for the past several months. We had one nibble, but we failed to set the hook. I ask if

you know of someone with an accounting background, please direct them to our website for details.

While I'm at it, a special thank you to Linda Alkenbrack for her dedication for the past six years. We appreciate all that you have done for us.

Special thanks to volunteers Joan Selwood for recording the Minutes at Board Meetings; Janine McClintock for looking after your website and social media reach; Bev Cook, our Communications Committee Chair, for the countless hours she dedicates to the Friends; finally, the Park's Naturalist - Kristen Osborne, for her assistance in developing this Power Point presentation. I believe all should be recognized with some applause.

Minutes of the 2024 Friends' AGM

Our 2024 AGM minutes were posted on our website and the Chair hoped that everyone had taken the opportunity to review them. He asked if there were any amendments to the Minutes and the answer was "None". It was moved by Bjorn Jacobsen and seconded by Wayne Meyers that the Minutes be accepted - **carried.**

Greetings from the Municipality of Brighton

The Chair introduced Mayor Brian Ostrander who brought greetings from the town of Brighton. Brian thanked the Friends for all the work they had done and told them to carry on the good work. He said we were lucky to be here since the town of Newcastle had not been built!

2024 Accomplishments and 2025 Plans

Communications

Promotional Posters - We produced promotional posters and had them distributed for the Park's display boards, advertising the BBQ, Gift Shop, Bursary Program and Memorial Tree Planting.

Social media - we had a minimum of three posts per week on Facebook, consisting of a mixture of events, promotion, Park announcements, nature stories and pictures. We cross promoted our social media posts to other Brighton Facebook pages deemed appropriate. We will continue this activity in 2025.

e-Newsletters and e-Bulletins - we produced three E-newsletters this past year. Along with the newsletters we launched an abbreviated version called the e-bulletin. Two issues were distributed (Common Terns 2023 and Summer Activities in the Park). Being a member entitles you to automatically receive these letters and bulletins. If you change your e-mail address, please ensure that you notify us. We will continue this activity in 2025.

Friends Section of the Park Tabloid - The tabloid includes several pages about the Friends of Presqu'ile. The four-page section is an excellent read on who and what we do for all park visitors. We have again submitted content for the 2025 tabloid.

Promotion of Park Events - We promoted Waterfowl Weekend, Warblers and Whimbrels, Monarch and Migrants to local media outlets including radio interviews as requested.

Presentations in the Community - We spoke to outside service clubs as required. We gave presentations to the Brighton Rotary and Presqu'ile Probus Clubs. We plan to continue this engagement with the community in 2025.'

Beacon Magazine - Bev Cook has been submitting articles and photos quarterly for this magazine. I'm sure most of us enjoy those articles about the Friends and the Park.

Website - The website is doing what it should do. That is to say it publicizes all Park and Friends events, and there are many throughout the season. Again, a big thank you to Janine McClintock who updates our website on a continuous basis to keep it fresh.

Photographs - Bjorn Jacobsen, a Director on the Board and who serves as the Vice President, is also our photographer. Bjorn captures those smiling faces at the Friends' events for social media and website promotions. Thank you Bjorn for your efforts with the camera.

Education

Student Bursaries. The $3,000 J. Beverlie Cook Career Bursary was awarded to summer student **Jack Anstead**. This was Jack's second year at Presqu'ile where he served as Park Warden. He is studying History and Education at Brock University. He hopes for a career educating visitors on the need for conservation in Ontario Parks so people can enjoy them for generations to come.

The $1,000 Staff Bursary was awarded to summer student staff member **Ava Trefiak**. Ava studies at the University of Guelph for Indigenous Environmental Science & Practice where she contributes her skill set with the Park's Discovery Program. She also assisted with Biodiversity Projects in the Fall of 2024. The Bursary Program continues unchanged in 2025.

Discovery Staffing - in 2024 we supported two six-week Spring positions as well as the 16-week Nature Centre Coordinator position. The six-week students assisted with setting up the Nature Centre and Lighthouse Centre as well as helping with school programs delivered in the Park. For the 2025 season we will be supporting two six-week Spring positions, as well as supporting the 16-week Nature Centre Coordinator position again. This year our Nature Centre Coordinator is Ava Trefiak, a familiar face as she worked on the Discovery team for four years now and was a bursary winner last summer.

Environment

Common Tern Research. We have financially supported this study for over 11 years and will continue to do so in 2025. 2024 saw significant expansion of the Protective Grid known as the Predator Exclusion System. This was monitored by Jennifer Arnold and Stephen Oswald of Penn State University, along with Ontario Park's Staff. Regretfully, Jennifer and Stephen were unable to make the trip this year to our AGM. For the past 18 years, Jennifer's collaborative work with husband Stephen Oswald has focused on understanding the ecology of declining populations, of inland breeding Common Terns and developing management strategies to mitigate declines. 2024 appeared to be the most successful year to date, until a Night Heron penetrated the system and destroyed several chicks. On record 281 nests produced 273 chicks. Between 169 and 207 chicks were fledged (the definition meaning for a young bird to grow feathers and learn to fly). A 16-year-old female, banded in 2008, was also identified nesting. A detailed report on this project is on the Friends' website.

Habitat Regeneration/Park Nursery. We support the park nursery both financially and with volunteers when required. Potted, planted and replanted seedlings and acorns are collected in the Fall for Spring planting. White Pine, White Birch and White Cedar are on the Park's radar for regeneration. Five beds, 4' x 48', are prepared for Spring Planting. We will continue to support this activity this year.

Tree Planting. This reforestation activity is done in the early Spring and Fall, by Park staff hired by the Friends, and Friend's volunteers. This past Fall, the Park

Biodiversity Staff were hired for an extended period of weeks. A quick summary reflects their efforts in that 459 trees were planted. On two designated Tree Planting Fridays, Friends Volunteers planted over 50 trees themselves. The biodiversity staff will again be hired for an extended period this Fall.

Invasive Species Removal. This project is one that is never ending. The Friends support this activity financially and with volunteers again. The Park removed Buckthorn from various locations, most notably Calf Pasture. Removal of Scots Pine shoots from The Panne was also undertaken. Other species targeted in the future include Dog Strangling Vine, Phragmites, Garlic Mustard, and others. We continue to apply for grants to assist financially with this project.

Bird Program. This project supports two bird-related programs. The Winter Bird-Feeding Station in the Camp Office Parking Lot along with Bird Banding Demonstrations being run by licensed volunteers on the Spring and Fall Special Event Weekends. We also financially support new bird feeders when required, and bird seed when required.

Operations

Audrey's Place on the Marsh Boardwalk. This deck is used for school group educational programs, and the public uses it as a rest spot when hiking. The current deck now has a partial roof on it which was installed in the Fall of 2024. The construction of a partial roof over the deck will allow students, the public and staff, a place to get out of the sun or rain while utilizing this deck. This project was funded by the Friends with the construction being done by the chosen contractor.

Storage Shed. Last year we had to find a storage shed for our signs and tools. The Board gave approval for the purchase of this shed, located in the Parks maintenance yard. The shed still needed interior walls to be installed and a fresh coat of paint, which has been done. There's plenty of space for additional items to be stored in the future.

Trail Maintenance/Monitors. Trail maintenance went well the past year. Volunteers are scheduled to walk the trails, clean up small problems as required and notify the Park of any major problems. The operations team spread wood chips and mulch along 150 plus metres of wet areas on the Pioneer and Newcastle Trails. Most recently, 30 metres of chips and mulch were spread onto the woodland portion of the Marsh Boardwalk Trail. This activity will continue in 2025 as it is never ending.

Boardwalks. Boardwalk maintenance is never ending as old boards and damaged boards need replacing. Most of our efforts will be directed at the boardwalk on Jobes Wood Trail this year.

Misc. Projects - Viewing Platform. We are planning a complete rebuild of the Wildlife Viewing Platform located behind the Lighthouse. This construction work should begin late Summer or early Fall.

Nature Centre - Classroom. We have named this project "Garage to Greatness: Building Nature's Classroom". This project, which is a very ambitious one, will revitalize the Nature Centre and transform the garage of the old yellow house into a classroom. It will become a four-season venue for the Park's Discovery Program, as well saw a space for adult education and other events. More on this later.

Amphitheatre. The new projection screen has been delivered but not yet installed. The speakers/sound system are also on order. These upgrades to modernize will be of value and beneficial for the presentation of educational purposes such as the Discovery Programs, History Weekend and special events, like our own AGM. These activities are all aligned with the Friends' Vision and Mission Objectives in support of education.

Operations Coordinator. A big thank you to Brent Barnes, who took over from Larry Paradis as our new Operations Director at the beginning of the year. A lot of projects to be started and completed.

<u>Fundraising.</u>

Memorial Tree Planting. This continues to be a very successful fund-raising program generating $100/tree planted. A total of 44 trees were planted in 2024. Fifteen memorial trees were planted in April of this year. The small trees that are planted are currently fenced in so that the deer don't get at them. We will continue this activity in the Fall.

BBQ. Bob Engle and his team of enthusiastic volunteers offer hot dogs, hamburgers, sausages, drinks and even cookies on Saturdays in July and August and at special events like this past Waterfowl and Warblers and Whimbrels weekends. The BBQ has proved to be very popular with campers and Park visitors. The BBQ is a key revenue stream for Friends, bringing in over $8,400 in 2024.

Lighthouse Gift Shop. We were up and running the Gift Shop two days a week in June and four days a week in July and August. The Gift Shop is a key revenue

stream for the Friends with sales exceeding $45,000 in 2024. That's up $3,000 from the previous year. 2025 will showcase many new items, including an increase of art in the Store and being displayed in our Art Gallery which is next to the Gift Shop. We look forward to you all stopping by this summer in the hope of making a purchase.

Donations. Donations to our Environmental Fund and our General Fund are always appreciated. We received several bequest donations last year. A bequest is a gift made to a nonprofit organization as part of a donor's will. It can include monetary assets, or other valuable items. Bequests are usually a donor's way of leaving a legacy and ensuring that the organization receives continued support. Bequests can be of any size, big or small, and can be gifted from the donor's estate after their passing. Something to consider when asking "How can I help?"

Contests/Campaigns. McDougal Insurance recently sponsored a Short Video Contest which we entered. The hope was to win one of the three cash prizes being offered. Winners were published this past Monday on McDougal's website. I would have liked to say we won, unfortunately the Friends were not chosen for any of the prizes. The good news is we now have a great short video on our website that we can use to promote Friends' work. Check it out.

We are launching a Fund-Raising Campaign called the "Garage to Greatness Campaign: Building Nature's Classroom". Some of you may have remembered our previous campaign to "Raise the Marsh Boardwalk". That was a very successful fund raiser. We are anticipating that this new campaign will likewise be as successful, so please help us to fund our "Garage to Greatness Campaign". More details are forthcoming in the near future.

Volunteers

Who are the Volunteers? Trail Monitors who monitor nine trails through the Park. Volunteers who assist with our biodiversity projects like nursery work, planting trees remove of invasive species, there's the BBQ team. Then there are those assisting in the Nature Centre, Lighthouse Centre, and the Gift Shop. The operations team with construction and maintenance. Various committee teams and of course, the Board of Directors. In total between 100-125 volunteers at any given time. Thank you all and I believe all these volunteers deserve a round of applause.

Grants and Strategic Planning

Education. We received grants of $21,000 from Canada Summer Jobs and the TD Bank Friends of the Environment Fund to support our Nature Centre Coordinator, and two student positions in the Nature Centre and Lighthouse Interpretive Centre. A $1,850 grant came from the Brian Todd Memorial Community Fund to help us purchase 30 sets of kids' binoculars. This will enhance the Discovery Program and will help at events like Warblers and Whimbrels weekend. The School Bus Bursary Program allocates $800 per school to help with bus rentals to bring classes from five local schools to the Park.

Environmental - Phragmites Control. Last year and again this year we applied for two grants worth a total value of $60,000. In 2024 we received a grant for $34,000. 2025 is still pending - hoping to have results by today. The idea here is to utilize the grants in order to map and manage phragmites in the Park.
Reforestation. We are having discussions with foresters at Ontario 50 million Trees Program about reforestation in some areas decimated by the emerald ash borer. The plan is to accelerate tree planting, and we hope to apply for a big grant in September.
Turtle 2.0. We are having discussions with the Park about this Species at Risk. This entails replacing the existing turtle fencing and extending it.

Big Project 2025. You may have received an e-newsletter about it or have seen it on our website and social media platforms. I briefly mentioned it under Contest and Campaigns, but it's worth mentioning it again. Putting nature and education together, our big project for this year is to revitalize the Nature Centre. This is our "Garage to Greatness: Building Nature's Classroom" program, and part of that project is to transform the garage of the old yellow house into a learning centre. This will enable us to conduct four season educational programming and would give us a place to have classes and events during inclement weather.

We have to recognize Wayne and Sandy Meyers for spearheading raffles last year that helped with these projects.

And that, my fellow Friends Members, is what we have been doing the past year and what we intend to do this year.

2024 Financial Statement

Next on our Agenda is the Accountant Reviewed Financial Statement for December 31, 2024.

At this time, I want to recognize Linda Alkenbrack's contribution to the board as Treasurer and for developing Financial Statements. She is able to advise the Board, in laymen terms how the finances are calculated, with easy-to-read Income Statements and Balance Sheets, on a monthly basis. Thank you Linda for your efforts.

A "Review" of our Financial Statements has been conducted by Accountants Welch LLP. The Financial Statement as "Reviewed", has been accepted by the Board. The Financial Statement was posted on our website, and I hope you have taken the opportunity to review it. I will highlight the areas of interest.

Page #4 of the Financial Statement (Statement of Operations & Changes in Net Assets) tells the story. Our revenue of $79,460 was greater than our expenses of $74,775, reflecting an excess of revenues over operating expenses of $4,685.

The market value of our investments increased this year by $47,439.00. We continue to be in a strong financial position with net assets of $218,816.

The 25th Anniversary Fund assists the Board in determining the required funds to allocate towards environmental initiatives in the coming fiscal year.
For 2024 it was $9,131. For this fiscal year 2025 it will reflect $9,053. The Board in the past has adhered to this spending and often allocates more money based on the project requirements for successful completion.

Question per Year End Statement?

Who will move to approve? Bev Cook moved, seconded by Don Davis. All were in favour. **Motion Carried**.

The Chair now put forth a **motion** to appoint Accountants Welch LLP for the fiscal 2025 review. There was no discussion in this. Motion seconded by Cora McCallum. All were in favour. **Motion Carried**.

Park Update
Kristen Osborne, Chief Park Naturalist - Presqu'ile - Ontario Parks

Kristen noted that Park Superintendent Rob Cunningham could not attend - he sent his regrets.

Many projects are done by Friends. They would not have been done as fast without the help of Friends. The Park is very grateful. Presqu'ile has over 340,000 visitors each year and is expecting a similar number for 2025. Could be a busy summer, weather permitting. Numbers have been on the rise since the pandemic. There are lots of dead and dying trees due to the infestation of ash borers. In the Fall a lot of trees were cut down. There are still more to be cut down in the campgrounds. Two campgrounds closed early to allow trees to be cut. The tree nursery is growing a new crop of trees - it is filled with baby trees.

There is a new Ontario Parks website. New clothing, such as sweaters, is now available. There are plovers nesting on the beach - there are two nests. This is exciting news as it creates lots of educational opportunities. We are not able to groom the beaches with the tractor - it may get smelly. If anyone asks - there are five nests in all of Ontario and we have two!

The Group Campground has been closed and is being refigured into an opportunity for more electrical installations for use all year round. No update as yet and it is closed for now. Lots of hard work is going on. Kristen hopes everyone will be safe and have an enjoyable summer.

Board of Directors & Elections

The Chair introduced Parliamentarian - Bev Cook.

Board of Directors

Retiring Directors
Incumbents
Nominees 2025
Election of Board of Directors 2025-26

1. The Chair thanked Linda Alkenbrack, retiring director.

2. Incumbents: Michelle Buchkowsky
Bjorn Jacobsen
Phil McRae
Dan Riggs

3. Candidates:
- Terry Buchkowsky - second three-year term
- Brent Barnes - appointed by Board of Directors in January 2025. Brent has lived in Brighton for 10 years and is a volunteer train monitor.
- Catherine Lariviere - appointed by Board of Directors in Spring 2025 as Corporate Secretary - a crucial role. Catherine has 20 years of professional experience.
- Christy Trescher (new) - Director at Large.

Motion to approve the proposed slate of Directors - moved by Brent Barnes, seconded by Fred Helleiner - carried. Congratulations to the new Board.

Board of Directors 2025-26

Brent Barnes
Michelle Buchkowsky
Terry Buchkowsky
Bjorn Jakobsen
Catherine Lariviere
Phil McRae
Dan Riggs
Christy Trescher

The Chair thanked Bev for being the Parliamentarian for another year. The Chair also felt this was an appropriate time to name and recognize the original board members:

John Cole
Elizabeth Chatten
Margaret Jean Bain
Glenn Spence
Jane Irvine (nee Law)
Nick Quickert

They were thanked for establishing this wonderful organization that has given so much to the Park in the areas of Education, the Environment and Infrastructure.

Awards

The Chair noted that there are some years in which we are dormant in giving out awards. He was pleased to say that this is not the case this year. We have two worthy recipients to accept this year's awards.

The John Cole Award, name in honour of our first Board Chair, is given to the **Volunteer of the Year**. The Board of Directors has the difficult task of selecting one volunteer from the many deserving candidates. Our Volunteer of the Year is to be a shining example of the value of our organization and his or her service to the Friends' organization. This year's recipient is **Linda Alkenbrack**. During Linda's six-year term as Treasurer, she has greatly expanded our financial reporting activities, providing full monthly financial reports for all portfolios. She has also taken on duties formerly done by the Finance Chair with respect to our Annual Budgets, Investments and Compliance activities. She does all the year-end work as well. A round of applause for Linda. Linda was presented with a lighthouse sculpture.

On to the **Life Membership Award**. Life Memberships are granted to those individuals who have demonstrated significant, sustained, and high-quality volunteer service over a period of years. Life Memberships reflect a dedication to the value of the Friends. Any member may nominate another for a Life Membership by submission to the Board of Directors. This year's recipient is **Phil McRae**. Phil has served on the Board for nine years and counting. He has ably served as the liaison between the ecology team and the volunteers - ensuring that we have the right resources - financial and human - to carry out critical environmental initiatives. He has spearheaded the Memorial Tree Planting

Program since its inception, allowing for planting of dozens of trees, if not hundreds of trees and thousands of dollars in donations to the Park. During a difficult period during covid, Phil stepped into the role of the Chair, managing restrictions, resignations, and loss of fund-raising programs. Although he claimed to be the "Reluctant Chair", his steady hand kept things afloat during a very difficult challenging time for the Friends. Thank you Phil for your dedication. Phil was photographed with his Life Membership Certificate.

Questions

The Chair asked if there were any questions about what had been presented and what the future holds for the organization. There were none.

Closing Remarks

In closing the Chair would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for attending and taking an active role in this 37th Friends AGM. He hoped this meeting had been both meaningful and informative for everyone and that you will continue to support the Friends as members and volunteers.

Motion to Adjourn at 11:30am by Phil McRae - Carried.

All attendees were treated to a boxed lunch following the meeting.