



The Guelph Field Naturalists

Invite you to hear

David Phillips

Vol 43, #1
Sept/Oct 2012

WHAT'S UP WITH THE WEATHER?

Thurs. Sept 13th 7:30PM

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www.guelphfieldnaturalists.org



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE — Peter Kelly

Welcome to a new year of the Guelph Field Naturalists! Who could have anticipated that, in the time since we issued our last newsletter, North America was about to experience its worst drought in close to 50 years? Those of you with gardens will certainly know how difficult it was to keep everything green and flourishing. The drought dominated the news for much of the summer. Blame fell on what has been termed a 'flash drought,' i.e. a drought spawned by a stubborn dome of high pressure that brought brutally hot days and above average night-time temperatures over much of central North America.

Understandably so, the media focus over the summer was on the impacts of the drought to our food supply. You didn't have to travel too far beyond Guelph's city limits to see the evidence yourselves. Some fields responded well to the rains that finally came at the end of July while others were simply too far gone. Some crops were devastated before the summer even hit. An unusual heat wave in March followed by a return to below freezing temperatures destroyed much of Southern Ontario's fruit crop. Climate change experts predict that events like these may become more common in the 21st Century.

Yet, despite concerns for the farming community during this time, my thoughts kept drifting to our flora and fauna. How did Southern Ontario's native plants and animals fare during this time? I saw or read very little on this topic over the summer but I can only imagine that there must have some impact. A small coldwater stream that I frequently visit dried up for the first time in recent memory. Since many insects have an aquatic phase, I can only imagine that their populations must be down. Other food sources for birds such as caterpillars, beetle grubs and flies were undoubtedly lower in number. I read one anecdotal report of House Wrens switching their feeding strategies from bushes and trees to the ground thus shifting their food source from soft caterpillars to hard grasshoppers. This means that they were expend-

ing more energy to forage. Cedar Waxwings may have struggled as many shrubs produced fewer berries.

With fewer insects to feed upon, some birds may have had difficulty keeping both themselves and their young alive. Some may be entering the winter months with less fat reserves, thus jeopardizing their survival during the winter months or on their migration routes south. Mammals like chipmunks and squirrels which hoard seeds for consumption may also face an uncertain food supply over the winter months.

Smaller water bodies and less stream flow may also crowd waterfowl which face increased competition for food, increased vulnerability to predators and an increased chance of contracting disease. On the upside, shorebirds may have had an easier time hunting for food on emerging mudflats along rivers and lakes and less water may concentrate prey for birds like Great Blue Herons. The Arboretum reported an overcrowding of frog populations as ponds dried up on their grounds.

Overall, while some impacts are inevitable, it is unlikely that the summer of 2012 will have long-term negative effects on our native populations of flora and fauna. After all, they have faced such conditions on occasion in the past. However climate change models predict more such events in the decades ahead. If these events start happening with increasing frequency, we may start seeing significant ecological shifts.

Since our changing climate is foremost in many of our member's minds we are fortunate to welcome 'Canada's Weather Guru' David Phillips from Environment Canada who will be speaking on the topic "What's Up with the Weather?" at our first meeting on September 13th. This will be an interesting and exciting start to the new GFN season. I hope to see you there.

NEWSLETTER — Margaret Hull and Jessica Klawunn

The newsletter is published five times a year – every two months except July and August. Please send all contributions for the next issue (Nov/Dec) to Jessica Klawunn. The deadline is October 20th. Thank you to all contributors. Stephen Lewis is our front page artist — many thanks Steve.

PERSONAL WANT ADS

As a service to Members we run personal "want" ads or "for sale" ads of a nature theme at no charge. Contact either Margaret or Jessica if you have anything to sell or anything you want to acquire.

INDOOR PROGRAM — Kirsten Middleton

All meetings begin at 7:30 pm (December and June excepted) on the second Thursday of each month, and are held at the University of Guelph's Arboretum Centre. For confirmation and updates, please visit our website at www.guelphfieldnaturalists.org. We begin with a brief business meeting, followed by a 10 minute break then the speaker's presentation. **Non-members are very welcome and goodwill donations are gratefully appreciated - suggested contribution is \$2 per person.**

The entrance to the Arboretum is on College Avenue just west of Victoria Road. For a map see: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/arboretum/ArbOverview/Directions.htm> The path to and from the car park is unlit in places - bringing a flashlight would be a good idea.

Thursday Sept 13th, 2012 — WHAT'S UP WITH THE WEATHER? David Phillips

Is extreme weather the new norm? Is global climate going through unprecedented change? Join us as Senior Climatologist at Environment Canada David Phillips discusses the symptoms and impacts of a warming planet and what it means to the biodiversity and life-sustaining habitats of our plants and animals in Ontario.

Thursday Oct 11th, 2012 — GULL WATCHING IN ONTARIO Jean Iron

Come explore the fascinating and challenging world of gulls. Expert ornithologist Jean Iron will help us appreciate the 21 species of gulls in Ontario with tips on identification, plumages, and the inside scoop on when and where to find rare gulls.

Thursday Nov 8th, 2012 — WOLVES AND COYOTES IN ONTARIO: POPULATION STATUS AND RECENT RESEARCH Dr. Brent Patterson

In conjunction with the release of the "Strategy for wolf conservation in Ontario" in 2005, the Province launched a comprehensive research program to better determine the distribution, abundance, and ecological roles of wolves and coyotes in representative ecosystems across the province. Dr. Brent Patterson (research scientist with MNR) will provide an update on the present status of Ontario's wolves and coyotes.

Thursday Dec 13th, 2012 — ANNUAL MEMBERS' NIGHT

Potluck Supper with presentations by club members at 6:00** pm.

This is the meeting when members show us pictures from their recent trips. Please let Kirsten know if you have a presentation to make so it can be fitted into the schedule. Come for a delicious potluck dinner, and stay for our members' presentations which will begin at about 7:15 pm.

Details to come in the next newsletter.

** Please note early start time of 6:00 pm for this event

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YOUNG NATURALISTS and NATURALISTS IN TRAINING — Ann & Tamara

The Fall **Naturalists in Training (NIT) program** (ages 11-16) includes 4 sessions, meeting from 10:00 am to noon. Nature educators will engage the NITs in “hands-on” activities with mammals, primitive survival skills, plants, and birds, plus a treasure hunt for “geocaches.” The Fall program starts on Saturday, September 15, 2012, and continues monthly until Saturday, Dec. 1st. The Winter program includes 2 two-hour sessions, 2 expanded sessions, plus an overnight camping trip. The winter program begins on Saturday, January 26, 2013, from 10:00 a.m. to noon, continues monthly through April 6th, and winds up with an overnight camping trip.

Please see the [*Naturalists in Training brochure*](#) on the Guelph Field Naturalists web-site.

*We are currently looking for a GFN volunteer to help work with the NIT program. If you are interested, please contact Tamara Anderson (frogforest@hotmail.com).

The Fall **Young Naturalists (Nats) Program** (ages 6-10) includes 7 sessions, and meets at Guelph Lake Nature Centre, unless otherwise noted. Nature educators will engage the children in “hands-on” activities with birds, insects, bats, and caving, plus a treasure hunt for “geocaches.” The Fall Program begins on Saturday, September 15, 2012 at 6:30 pm. The Winter Program includes 9 sessions, with two evening programs, one field trip, plus a Saturday night overnight camp-out. The Winter Program begins on January 12, 2013, from 10:00 a.m. to noon, and continues on alternate Saturdays through April 27th. It winds up with a family camp-out on May 18-19.

Please see the [*Young Naturalists brochure*](#) on the Guelph Field Naturalists web-site.

Visit www.guelphfieldnaturalists.org or phone the Guelph Lake Nature Centre at 519-836-7860 for information.



the beach or traveling around Long Point on grander geocaching adventures. Everyone gathered together in the evening for supper around the campfire. There were games and a night hike to look for owls and coyotes to round out the evening.

Keen birders awoke at 6 am to head out to the Old Cut banding station for an early morning bird hike with Larry Staniforth. The rest of us arrived later to have a tour of the station and watch the banding. Some Young Nats stayed for most of the day while others headed out with the researchers from the waterfowl centre to look for swallowtail butterflies.

Funds from the TD Canada Trust Friends of the Environ-

*Long Point
Banding
Station
outing —
campfire and
banding demo.*

WHAT WE DID

Last May there was an “overnight” indoor camp at the Waterfowl Research and Education Centre at Turkey Point. Funding came in part from the TD Friends of the Environment grant in support of the NITS and Young Nats. Here is a report of the camp followed by some comments from participants about the programs in general.

TURKEY POINT BIRD BANDING TRIP

On May 19th and 20th, 55 Young Naturalists and Naturalists in Training and their families travelled to the Waterfowl Research and Education Centre in Turkey Point. Upon arrival, participants were given a site tour and then headed out on a geocaching adventure. Down time was spent at



ment grant went to cover the cost of renting the facilities at the research centre. Parents really appreciated the opportunity to travel to Long Point and explore the natural world with their families.

APPRECIATION FROM PARTICIPANTS IN NITs AND NATS PROGRAMS

Thank you Ann and Tamara for all the wonderful programs this season! We really enjoyed the camping at Longpoint.

Thanks again for all of your efforts!
Kelly and Katie Jones

My only comments are: A HUGE THANK YOU TO ALL! Your program is absolutely wonderful and Taylor totally enjoyed himself. I think the two programs Taylor (who was 6) got the most out of was the edible plants and the tracking - I've seen that knowledge has sunk in and been retained on subsequent hikes. For me the frog frolic will be a memory I'll hold dear for a long time; Taylor didn't want to leave even though

he had managed to get a soaked foot and was so excited that he had caught a mayfly larva.

Thanks again for your commitment and this fantastic program that ignites a love of nature in all touched by it!

Taylor's Parent

Hi! Thanks again for another great year at Guelph Lake! It's grown to be such a part of our family routine, that we couldn't imagine not signing up for another year! I really liked how you switched it up this year and had a number of evening programs too. We LOVED the camping spot at Turkey Point and hopefully can go there again next year if funding allows. Our favourites over the years have been:

- a) Owl Prowl
- b) Bat Night
- c) Moth Night with the goop
- d) Rockwood Caving
- e) Green Legacy
- f) FLYING SQUIRREL MAN!!!!

g) Guest Speakers with the birds of prey and snakes

h) Frog Frolic

i) Animal Tracks -the plaster molds were awesome!

j) Monarchs

k) BIRD BANDING!!!!

We missed the Starkey Loop hike this year, but love that spot.

Sarah and Tash have learned so much from you and Tamara over the years -about nature and the environment and how to appreciate and respect everything around us. THANKS FOR THAT!

Cathy :)

Amber had an absolute blast with the program this year, her first of many I'm sure. She is still talking about Long Point!

She is ready for next session and can't wait for her sister to join her next fall!

Thanks again for offering such an enjoyable, educational program.

Sean Staniforth

TD Friends of the Environment supports Naturalists-in-Training Program

The GFN has received a grant of \$1,348.66 from TD Friends of the Environment to assist the Naturalist-in-Training Program, supporting educational experiences monitoring water quality along the Grand River watershed, and an educational program and "camp" for both the Naturalists-in-Training and Young Naturalists at Long Point Waterfowl education centre in May 2012.



**Friends of the
Environment
Foundation**

Notes for Novices #3 — Fantastic Fungi

Forget about looking for wild mushrooms to eat and worrying about which ones will kill you. Instead, check out all kinds of fungi. Admire their many colours — even green, blue, and purple. Delight in their fantastic shapes — cups, balls, coral-like fingers, vases, clubs, and even pancakes fastened to trees.

Discover where mushrooms like to grow. Take photos, look up names. Get a field guide such as the one written by retired University of Guelph professor, Dr. George Barron. Do not depend on matching specimens to photos; mushrooms are quite variable. Read the descriptions.

Fungi grow on the ground, on dead wood (many), on living trees (some), but not on rocks or in very wet places. When to look? Especially August to October, several days after good rain, when



Hericium americanum

the temperature is moderate.

Mushrooms are the fruiting bodies of extensive networks of fine filaments (mycelium) that mostly live out of sight. When two filaments of the same species — but of opposite type — meet they may form a fruiting body if they have enough nutrition and moisture, and the weather suits. Mushrooms are patient and will wait years for the right conditions.

Many fungi grow among tree roots, especially pine and oak. Some mushrooms stick with one kind of tree, e.g., White Pine Boletes grow near white pines. Some fungi are easy to identify, but others will be difficult. Do not expect to find a name for every mushroom you see: only some of Ontario's thousands are in a book. Have fun.

Thanks again to Kathleen Brown for this contribution.

MUSHROOM WORKSHOPS COMING UP IN SEPTEMBER

Go to <http://natureknowledge.weebly.com/> for a list of nature workshops given by naturalist Richard Aaron. In particular you might be interested in the mushroom workshops for beginners on September 21 or 22, and for 'beyond beginners' on September 28th which are being held in Guelph at the Arboretum.

Programs at the Guelph Lake Nature Centre

Watch for new programs coming in the Fall !!

Please Visit www.grcra.ca for more information about all GRCA family programs

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BIRD WING — Larry Staniforth staniforth.larry@rogers.com 519-767-2693

BIRD WING HIKES

- *I have changed the day for our bi-weekly/weekly hikes. They will now be held on Thursdays.*
- *Most hikes are all day outings unless otherwise specified. Bring lunch and refreshments as necessary.*
- *We will usually visit a local restaurant for lunch, and stop for nature breaks where possible. Bring any refreshments you deem necessary.*
- *Hikes usually depart from the WBU parking lot at Gordon and Kortright.*
- *Go or NoGo will be determined at the WBU parking lot and depends on the weather at the target location. If the weather is not good there, we may decide to go somewhere else. Please dress appropriately for the weather.*
- *These hikes are meant to be primarily bird viewing outings and as such it is essential that the group stays together and remains relatively quiet (the best way to find birds is by their songs).*
- *We will from time to time encounter exceptional sights during our hikes. We will endeavour to enjoy these encounters when they occur. (E.g. foxes, coyotes, bears)*
- *Non-members of the GFN are welcome to join in our hikes and meetings, but please consider joining if you find them enjoyable.*

Thurs. Sept. 6th	- Hawkcliff/Port Stanley	- 8 am
Thurs. Sept. 13th	- Hullett/Mitchell	- 8 am
Thurs. Sept. 27th	- Hawkcliff/Port Stanley	- 8 am
Thurs. Oct. 11th	- Hamilton	- 8 am
Thurs. Oct. 25th	- Caledonia/Ruthven	- 9 am

BIRD WING MEETINGS

We have moved the monthly meeting dates one week later to the last Monday of each month from September thru May. All meetings will be held in the basement common area at the Ellington Residences, 168 Metcalfe Street at 7:30 pm. Entrance is via the covered ramp on the north east end of the building.

Mon. Sept. 24th - Episode from 'Life of Birds.' Discuss summer sightings.

Mon. Oct. 29th - Karen Bateman will speak to us about her Tanzania trip.

FLAP: A REMARKABLE BAY STREET BIRD BRIGADE SAVING TINY LIVES

From The Globe and Mail Online, May 25, 2012 — written by Marcus Gee

Carrying two butterfly nets and wearing shorts, a bright yellow windbreaker and a baseball cap, Brian Armstrong cuts quite a figure among the suits and stilettos of Toronto's financial district in the morning rush. Passersby would find him even more unusual if they knew what was in his backpack – three wild birds: two live, one dead. Mr. Armstrong is a veteran of the Fatal Light Awareness Program, or FLAP. This remarkable band of passionate volunteers has been campaigning for nearly 20 years to reduce the annual toll of death and injury that befalls migrating birds when they collide with city office towers.

The group has made some important progress under the dogged leadership of founder Michael Measure and his crew of 50 to 60 helpers. In partnership with the City of Toronto, it has persuaded many buildings to turn off their lights after dark and some to coat their windows with dotted film and other coverings that make them visible to birds. But thousands of birds still run into buildings as they move through Toronto on their way to northern breeding grounds. Mr. Armstrong says that FLAP once collected 500 birds, dead and alive, in a six-hour period.

His collection this morning is modest. Because of our early spring, many birds have already passed through and the migration is petering out. The two live birds found on the pavement are an American redstart, black with orange wing flashes; the other a magnolia warbler with black mask and striped yellow breast.

Over its two decades, FLAP has retrieved 55,000 birds from 164 species, 22 of them listed as threatened. Live birds are usually taken to the Toronto Wildlife Centre in Downsview, and at the end of the season, FLAP donates the dead birds to the ornithologists at the Royal Ontario Museum.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES — Kyle Horner

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 23RD — 6 PM — BACKYARD SOCIAL: SECOND ANNUAL FALL POTLUCK!

A meet-and-greet with your executive and fellow members

Join us for our second annual fall potluck at 147 Bristol St., Guelph! Hosted by our vice-president, Jenn Bock, this casual outdoor dinner is an excellent opportunity to get to know fellow club members. We will have some good food, great company and even a nature game or two. Bring a potluck item and lawn chair if you can, or just yourself! A barbecue and limited cooking facilities are available if necessary.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7TH — 9:30 AM — FALCONS AND OWLS AND HAWKS, OH MY: THE BIRDS OF MOUNTSBERG

A stroll around Mountsberg Conservation Area

Come on out to Mountsberg Conservation Area, home of the Mountsberg Raptor Centre. We will spend a couple of hours exploring the conservation area, searching for fall birds and other interesting wildlife. At noon, we will take in a raptor show delivered by Mountsberg's knowledgeable staff, and spend some additional time viewing their bird-of-prey collection. There is a small shop on-site, but bring a snack and some water. Binoculars and cameras may also be useful! Meet at the Arboretum parking lot at 9 am to carpool, or in the Mountsberg parking lot at 9:30 am. A small admission fee will apply for the park. Mountsberg is fun for all ages, so feel free to bring the family.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27TH — 1 PM — FROM HUMBLE ROOTS: THE BEGINNINGS OF AN OLD GROWTH FOREST

A look at the Plant an Old Growth Forest Project with Land Assistant Kyle Horner

At the Ignatius Jesuit Centre, Guelph. Every old-growth forest had to begin somewhere, and ours is no exception. Come learn about Ignatius's 500 year plan to grow an old-growth forest, and see the changes that have already been made. This casual stroll will take us through several habitats along the provincially significant Marden Creek, and should provide good viewing for birds and other wildlife. Meet at the Arboretum parking lot at 12:45 pm to carpool, or at the Ignatius labyrinth at 1 pm.

NEARBY NATURALIST CLUBS' MEETINGS

HAMILTON

TBA

See www.hamiltonnature.org

KITCHENER/WATERLOO

Monday, Sept 24th

Managing a Club's Bird Sighting Records and Working with the eBird Website by Mike Burrell

Monday, Oct 22nd

Astrophotography and Light Pollution by Steve Holmes

See www.kwfn.ca

HALTON NORTH PEEL

TBA

See www.hnpnc.com

rare CHARITABLE RESEARCH RESERVE EVENTS

Most events are offered rain, snow or shine. Space is limited so please register early for events by calling 519-650-9336 ext 125 or by email at registration@reresites.org

Sat Sep 15th, 9am-12noon Tree and Shrub ID Hike
with Brett Woodman

Sun Sep 30th, 9:30am Fundraising Walk for rare

DON BRITTON - IN MEMORIAM

Dr. Don Britton died earlier this summer. He was a long time member of the GFN from near the beginning in the 1960s. He was also a strong supporter of the GFN and attended club meetings regularly as well as leading many field outings, primarily looking for ferns.

He was a professor at the U of G in the Botany and Genetics Department. His expertise was ferns and fern allies. He was the Canadian expert on the genus *Isoetes*, a primitive plant related to ferns. He co-authored the book "The Ferns and Fern Allies of Canada" published in 1984. He mentored many of today's well known botanists. He was awarded the 2007 Goldie Award by the Field Botanists of Ontario for his outstanding contributions to botanical research. He was also a major contributor and driving force behind the "Flora of Wellington County" which was printed in 2009 by Richard Frank and Allan Anderson.

A memorial service was held at St. George's Anglican Church, on Saturday, July 28.

GFN CALENDAR – UPCOMING EVENTS AT A GLANCE

Thur Sept 6	Bird Wing Hike	Hawkcliff/Port Stanley	8:00 am	WBU
Thur Sept 13	Bird Wing Hike	Hullett/Mitchell	8:00 am	WBU
Thur Sept 13	Indoor Meeting	What's Up With the Weather?	7:30 pm	Arboretum
Sun Sept 23	Outdoor Activity	Fall Potluck	6:00 pm	See p. 7
Mon Sept 24	Bird Wing Meeting	Episode from 'Life of Birds'	7:30 pm	Ellington
Thur Sept 27	Bird Wing Hike	Hawkcliff/Port Stanley	8:00 am	WBU
Sun Oct 7	Outdoor Activity	Birds of Mounstberg	9:00 am	Arboretum parking lot
Thur Oct 11	Bird Wing Hike	Hamilton	8:00 am	WBU
Thur Oct 11	Indoor Meeting	Gull Watching in Ontario	7:30 pm	Arboretum
Thur Oct 25	Bird Wing Hike	Caledonia/Ruthven	9:00 am	WBU
Sat Oct 27	Outdoor Activity	Ignatius Old Growth Forest	12:45 pm	Arboretum parking lot
Mon Oct 29	Bird Wing Meeting	Tanzanian Birds	7:30 pm	Ellington
Thur Nov 8	Indoor Meeting	TBA	7:30 pm	Arboretum
Thur Dec 13	Indoor Meeting	Potluck Supper/Members' Presentations	6:00 pm	Arboretum

FALCONRY

From Saudi Aramco World March/April 2012

Late in 2010, at a meeting in Nairobi, UNESCO announced that it would inscribe falconry onto the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). Abu Dhabi had spearheaded the effort that led to this announcement, submitting the application on behalf of 11 disparate nations: the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Morocco, Belgium, France, Spain, the Czech Republic, Mongolia and Korea. It was the largest and most internationally diverse application UNESCO ICH had ever received.

TERMINOLOGY DERIVED FROM FALCONRY

- Musket is the word for a male sparrowhawk, which flies quickly from the hand. The bird was likely the inspiration for the name of the muzzle-loaded infantry gun when it was first invented, since the sparrowhawk was a fast-flying object familiar at the time.
- The cadger was the man who carried a wooden rack, called a cadge, for falcons to perch on during hunts. Often an older falconer, he'd usually stand off to the side of the action, trying to cadge tips by spinning good stories. Perhaps some saw him as merely an old babbler, or codger.
- A bird of prey is said to mantle when it spreads one wing and then the other over the corresponding outstretched leg, or when it shields freshly captured prey from view by spreading both wings and its tail over it, just as a cloak or veil can mantle a person.
- When a hawk takes a deep drink, it is called bousing. When a person drinks too deeply, it is called boozing.
- As a fool can be hoodwinked by a deception, slipping a hood over a falcon's head also plunges the bird into a more literal darkness.
- The rapid dive of a falcon on its prey—a dive that has been clocked at nearly 400 kilometers an hour (250 mph)—is a stoop, like the bending forward of a human figure.
- When the jesses are secure, they are either under your thumb or wrapped around your little finger: Either way, the bird is fully in your control. Jesses are leather straps that wind around the bird's legs to allow a person to tightly hold the flighty creature.

Marilyn Swaby Rock Art Painting



Marilyn has been creating lovely painted rocks as gifts for our outdoor presenters, and now you can have a specially commissioned one for yourself for only \$35!!

Contact Marilyn at p.m.swaby@rogers.com

GUELPH FIELD NATURALISTS — EXECUTIVE

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Our website address is:

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Our Facebook link is:

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** seniors are 65+

Name(s) _____

No change from last year, OR —

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To save paper and postage costs, you will be sent an email link to the newsletter on our website if you provide an email address. In this case, do you also want a paper copy of the newsletter? Yes No

Would you like to be notified of any volunteer opportunities such as Education, Displays, Outdoor Programs, Indoor Programs, Executive Committee? Yes Not at this time

