

Nature Notes: Getting Out and About in the Bonnechere River Watershed this Summer!

Have you always wanted to paddle the Bonnechere, take a bike ride with friends, take a canvas and paint outdoors, or take a guided herb walk? Now you have a chance to do one or more of these wonderful activities this summer in the Bonnechere River watershed area! This *Nature in Your Neighbourhood* excursion series, is a collaborative initiative of the Ottawa River Institute and the Bonnechere River Watershed Project, with partners across the watershed, taking place this summer.

The excursion series kicked off on June 3 in Eganville with a mass paddle (photo) from Wilber Lake to Eganville as part of the first *Celebrate Our River* event in partnership with the Township of Bonnechere Valley. The next excursion will be in Renfrew on **Saturday July 14, in partnership with the Ontario Plein Air Society, the A.Y. Jackson Trail project and the Renfrew Art Guild, when one can participate in a "Paint Out", as part of the Renfrew Art in the Park event at Haramis Park at 160 O'Brien Rd in Renfrew, beginning at 9 am.** This will be a fun opportunity for artists of all levels to get out in nature, try their hand at open air painting, meet fellow painters, and be part of an exciting art weekend! This event is free for OPAS members and \$10 for non-members. Please pre-register with Pam Cunningham at pamc@sympatico.ca For more information, visit: <http://ontariopleinairsociety.ning.com/events/opas-eastern-ontario-plein-air-paint-out-july-14-renfrew>

The excursion series continues the following **Saturday, July 21st at 10 am, at Hoch Farm and Ecology Centre in Killaloe when herbalist Diana MacAuley will lead a herb walk through the grounds of Hoch Farm, exploring the medicinal and culinary herbs that grow throughout the farm and wetlands.** Come on out and identify and learn about the many and varied uses of herbs in our neighbourhood. Pre-registration is not required. Hoch Farm and Ecology Centre is located on Queen St, next to Killaloe Public School, in Killaloe. Check out the weekly Farmer's Market while you're there.

On **Saturday July 28, explore the lower section of the Bonnechere River from your canoe or kayak, as Ole Hendrickson and Kathy Lindsay co-lead a leisurely paddle excursion downriver from Renfrew, between the Second Chute and the confluence of the Bonnechere with the Ottawa River at Castleford.** Explore the river, its vegetation, wildlife and geology, and drink in the beauty of the First Chute, one of the most scenic spots on the entire Bonnechere! Paddlers are asked to meet with your canoe/kayak, floatation devices, and other safety equipment at 32 Bridge Street in Renfrew at 10 am. Proceed down the gravel road to the base of the second chute to the small parking area. The trip is approximately 15 km in length and will take about five hours, including a 200-meter portage around the First Chute. Shallow water levels may require some wading. The paddle will finish at the Horton Township boat launch, at the bridge on River Road. We will make certain that at least one car is parked at the boat launch to shuttle drivers back to Renfrew.

The last of the Nature in Your Neighbourhood excursion series will take place on **Sunday August 19, in partnership with the 2012 Tour de Bonnechere, when cyclists are invited to join with others for a group bike excursion. Celebrate cycling and take in the wonders of nature in the Bonnechere River watershed area as you tour your choice of the 20, 50 or 100 km routes.** Participants are asked to pre-register with Gearheads at 613-687-4624. The morning of the tour, sign in at the Legion Field Park in Eganville between 8:00 - 8:30 am, for a departure at 9 am. Cost is \$20, and pot-luck lunch. For more information visit: <http://tourdebonnechere.blogspot.ca/p/ride-day-details-and-famous-pot-luck.html> or call Chris Hinsperger at 613-628-2283.

More information on this series and the collaborative *Nature in Your Neighbourhood* initiative can be found at www.ottawariverinstitute.ca and www.BonnechereRiver.ca

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