

PROVINCIAL PARKS THIS SUMMER

Take a stroll with a Provincial Park Naturalist this summer and discover the varied plant and animal life found in Island ecological systems. Whether through a wood walk, beach walk or maybe just a friendly chat, there is no better way of becoming acquainted with the natural history of Prince Edward Island.

Brudenell River, Mill River and Cabot Provincial Parks offer scheduled interpretive programs from late June to early September. The naturalist staff also get involved in running short programs in some of the smaller parks as well as participate in many of Provincial Parks' special days, including Senior Citizens Day and the Brudenell River Canoe Race.

Although each naturalist designs their program to suit the park locale, certain activities, such as beach walks, are common throughout the interpretive system. These one-hour walks unmask the mystery of the various shellfish, seaweeds and other animal and plant life found along our shores.

More about shellfish may be found at "Shellfish Delight," one of many slide talks offered by the interpretive staff. Included with these illustrated talks are some tasty examples of cooked shellfish common to the park. Other slide talks might include a history of the silver fox industry in P.E.I., lobster and other forms of fishing, and interesting natural areas of P.E.I. Not all slide talks are available in every park so contact one of the interpretive or recreation staff members for information.

Another interpretive program offering edible samples is the Honeybee Colony Demonstrations at Brudenell River, Mill River and Cabot. The twice-weekly demonstrations are held in a specially-constructed building where the bees are visible behind glass windows. The social interactions between the bees, in addition to the complete honey-making process, can be seen through these window panes.

The interpretive staff and the Island Nature Trust worked closely together last summer to develop Canada's only living wildflower garden. Located at Brudenell River Provincial Park, the garden contains over 100 identified plants, most of them naturally occurring. A boardwalk is nearing completion and it is hoped that a brochure will be available when the garden opens in mid-June. During the summer months, the interpretive staff will be offering guided walks on a weekly basis.

The interpretive staff also work closely with the recreation staff to design and develop joint programs, such as the day-long canoe hike at Mill River and Brudenell River Provincial Parks. The participants in this family oriented activity take a leisurely paddle down the park river to a picnic site where clams, mussels and hot dogs are cooked over an open fire. The naturalist takes time out during the trip to show participants some of the more interesting plants and animals the park has to offer.

Plenty of other interpretive activities are offered by Provincial Parks during the summer months, including guided walks, nature crafts and campfires. The staff is always available to answer any questions on the plant and animal life of P.E.I. or to just have a conversation on the weather. Participating in interpretive programs is just one more way of making your visit to Provincial Parks more interesting, educational and enjoyable.