



# WINTER RIVER - TRACADIE BAY WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

is delighted to present the

## **Self-Guided Lady's Slipper Tour of the Winter River Trail**



# Welcome

Due to pandemic restrictions, we won't be hosting our annual Lady's Slipper hike. Instead, we have created a new method to share our local knowledge with hikers.

Please enjoy this self-guided tour of the Winter River Trail. We hope you catch a glimpse of our stunning provincial flower, the Lady's Slipper. Along the way, there are many other interesting features that we will highlight. Watch for the signs with the names of some native trees, shrubs, and other vegetation.

## What is a Lady's Slipper?

Lady's Slipper is a member of the Orchid family. It has officially been the provincial flower of PEI since 1965. Pink Lady's slipper is unique in that it has only two leaves at the base of the stem and a single flower that can be pink, yellow, or less commonly white. Their preferred habitat is the moss carpet and boggy areas of PEI.

## Information Stations

### Station 1: Nest Box

Can you spot the nest box? It was built and installed by WRTBWA staff to provide a home for our year-round resident, the Barred owl. Barred owls can pin-point sounds from far away with high-accuracy. The unique design of their wings makes their movement in flight virtually soundless.

## Station 2: Tim's Creek

Where this stream joins the main river is a popular fishing hole for species such as Gaspereau and Brook trout. The river around this area is also important for Brook Trout spawning (their mating process of laying eggs and fertilizing them).

## Station 3: Water Monitoring

WRTBWA staff have measured water flows and water quality in this area since 2015. Staff record water flows, and levels of nitrate, dissolved oxygen, temperature, and more at this site and five others throughout the watershed. This provides a long-term baseline dataset, allowing us to compare future conditions to the past.

## Station 4: Biodiversity

Do you notice more species of plants in this area? This is an area of high biodiversity. Look up! There is little canopy, allowing more sunlight to reach growing plants on the forest floor.

The large mounds of branches and woody debris are referred to as brush piles. They were created after WRTBWA staff selectively removed some standing dead trees from the forest. This removal allows new growth to have a greater chance at survival, by accessing more sunlight and nutrients!

## Station 5: Bank Stabilization

Marsh marigold, grass, and yellow birches are great supporters of the stream bank! More vegetation along sides of banks helps to mitigate erosion. The roots bind together to hold soil, and help it withstand the flowing power of stormwater and spring melt water.

## Station 6: Estuary

An estuary is an area where freshwater coming downriver meets incoming tidal saltwater. These brackish water areas provide important habitat for many fish species

## Station 7: Lady's Slipper Flowers

Look closely in the moss carpet. Are you able to identify the beautiful pink bloom of this flower?



## Station 8: Pines

The massive Eastern White Pine you see here is approximately 150 years old. Eagles love to use this type of tree for nesting, due to the height and the wide canopy. Are you able to wrap your arms around this tree?

## Station 9: More Lady's Slippers

If nature allows, you should be able to see an abundance of Lady's slipper flowers in this area. Please refrain from leaving the path or picking any of the flowers. Can you spot the beautiful pink bloom?

## **Share the Fun**

If you enjoyed this hike, post your photos on Instagram using #LadysSlipperTour or tag us with @wrtbwa

## **Who are we?**

Winter River – Tracadie Bay Watershed Association (WRTBWA) is a community-based watershed group and charitable organization that works to protect and enhance the health and aesthetic qualities of the Winter River – Tracadie Bay watershed.

You can help us carry out this work by donating online at [WinterTracadie.ca/Donate](http://WinterTracadie.ca/Donate)

# Importance of Winter River

From the 1930's until recently, the Winter River area was the source of all water for our capital, Charlottetown. Currently, 75% of the water comes from this area, so the health of this watershed impacts tens of thousands of people who use water within Charlottetown.

The health and productivity of the wetlands and watercourses within our watershed is of our utmost priority. Through various projects each year, we continuously strive toward this goal.

## Contact us

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# **Thank you**

The Winter River – Tracadie Bay Watershed Association would like to thank all the volunteers, staff members, and trail users who give their time and expertise to improve the area along this trail and many other locations within our watershed.

## **Island Trails**

The Winter River Trail is part of the Island Trails network, maintained by a group of volunteers who are passionate about hiking. Find more information about this trail and others at <https://www.islandtrails.ca/trail/winter-river-trail/>