

Learn about nature at the Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute

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Nova Scotia is blessed with a diverse and fascinating environment, and it's hard not to find something to become passionate about.

At the Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute, that passion is teaching members of the Queens County community about the rich natural world in their own back yards.

For the past 11 years, the institute has played host to an ongoing seminar series about a variety of topics from conservation, to sustainable living, to art. Every Thursday, a guest speaker from one of the 50 companies or organizations they partner with gives a short talk and a question and answer session.

"They're very well attended," says executive director Amanda Lavers. "Through the years, we've gotten a group of about 20 or 30 people who attend regularly."



The Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute is holding seminars on the natural world in their own backyards.

But, Lavers notes, there's always room for more.

The institute's main goals are to promote the sustainable use of natural resources and biodiversity conservation, but they do more than that. The seminar series helps to make local research more accessible to the community that it directly affects, and to make it better recognized.

So far this summer, the seminars have covered topics that have included Crown lands, what they are and how people can interact with them, birch bark canoe building and other traditional Mi'kmaq arts.

On Aug. 20, photographer Gary Conway will be on hand to talk about nature photography and to show some of his photographs, and on Aug. 27, Marion

Boddy, one of the many researchers at the institute, will be discussing the invasive small mouth bass species and their impact on local waterways.

During the summer, seminars are held on Thursday afternoons at 4 p.m., with lemonade and a light snack provided. The Mersey Tobeatic Institute will soon be announcing its fall line up, Lavers added.