

Paddling for Purpose: Annual Event Raises Funds for the Outer Islands Project



On Sunday, June 26, more than 100 paddlers from across Ontario took to the sparkling waters of Georgian Bay for the fourth annual Franklin Challenge. Kayakers, canoers, and even a few dogs set out from Snug Harbour, northwest of Parry Sound, to paddle around Franklin Island in support of the Georgian Bay Biosphere (GBB) Outer Islands Project (OIP) Fund, which provides funding to groups and individuals wishing to help reduce impacts and manage recreation sites on the islands of eastern Georgian Bay.

Started in 1997 by White Squall Paddling Centre, the OIP has been a community effort to mitigate recreation impacts by cleaning up campsites of garbage, dismantling fire pits, and installing outdoor toilets. The project also promotes a community-wide voluntary fire ban. While the paddling outfit

is still an active participant and leader for the project, White Squall and GBB encourage others to participate.

The annual cost for the cleanup requires significant fundraising and donations from partners to ensure the project can continue. As well, funds raised are available to individuals and groups wishing to help this effort. Any group can submit a request outlining what they intend to do, provide a budget and timeline for their work, and consideration for funding.

The project is a joint initiative in conjunction with other community partners, but since it's not publicly funded, it relies on lovers of the Bay to donate to the project. If you love the Bay, please consider donating to the GBB to keep the islands in good shape so they can be enjoyed by all for generations to come. (<https://www.gbb.ca/donate>)



Paddlers chose a from 20-km route around Franklin Island, or a shorter there-and-back route of 7-8 km.



It's about an hour's paddle from Snug Harbour to Henrietta Point at the south-west corner of Franklin.



The Outer Islands Project is a stewardship initiative to maintain and restore well or overused campsites on offshore, Crown land islands of Georgian Bay. Franklin sits on 13 km of Crown land and is part of the Georgian Bay Biosphere.



The paddling fundraiser was held June 26 in Snug Harbour in partnership with the Georgian Bay Biosphere.

Photos: Thom Morrissey