

Tantramar Marshes

I was reading the Sackville Tribune the other day when I noticed the article calling for submissions for “7 Wonders of Sackville”. I did not need any time to think about it as I knew exactly what one wonder was. This is why I am submitting the “Tantramar Marshes” as one of the “7 Wonders of Sackville”.

Beyond the marsh, and miles away
The great tides of the tumbling bay
Swing glittering in the golden days
Swing foaming back to and fro.
---Charles G.D. Roberts

I have lived with my family here in Westcock since 2003. After multiple moves in the military it was nice to “put down” roots in my hometown of Sackville N.B.. Shortly after we moved home, I was pressured by my family to get a new dog and a cat. That was a “no brainer” as I am an avid animal lover and totally enjoy the perks that go along with owning a pet, unconditional love. I have gotten into the habit of taking our dog “Rex” for his daily run (only because he gives me the “look”) on the dikes of the Tantramar Marshes. I know these marshes cover hundreds of square kilometers so I will only speak of the marshes that I frequent and that is off of the Old Hospital Loop Road in Westcock.



There, on the dikes, is where I find my peace and solitude. I am able to let Rex loose. He is part Beagle I am sure, as his nose goes down immediately to investigate all of the different smells the marsh has to offer him. Some times I wish I were a dog to experience his delight.

The Tantramar Marshes as well as the Bay of Fundy and Sackville are overflowing with history and I often imagine the beautiful wooden ships that were built here sailing in and out of the bay on a high tide. The painstaking efforts the Acadians took to build the enormous and intricate dike system amazes me every time I venture out. What stories the Bay could tell!



The days when the wind blows are the best. There is nothing better than hearing the wind in the fields and the sound of the water crashing onto the shores of the dikes (when the tide is in). Some days, I am deep with my thoughts when all of a sudden a group of pheasants takes off in flight, scaring me half out of my wits! I think I scare them more than they scare me.

There were two magical days I experienced when I was on one of my outings. Looking up I saw a group of 4 bald eagles soaring high in the sky. They were circling amongst themselves as they slowly moved across the marsh. I wasn't sure of the mating rituals for bald eagles but I figured it was happening when two of them grasped their talons together and started to drop at a very high speed. I knew what exactly was going on and it was the most beautiful thing I ever saw.

Another day, I was running along when I could see off in the distance what looked like a really big dog all by himself. Right away, I called Rex and hooked him back on his leash to avoid a confrontation. I soon realized it was a young deer galloping towards me. I thought he saw me as I was standing very still with



Rex on the dike road. I started to worry a bit when I realized he wasn't stopping. I got to thinking....,"Ok, I am going to be attacked by a deer and I did not have my cell phone with me". That will be a story to tell. All of a sudden he stopped but kept walking towards me, stopping from time to time to smell the air. He got about 50 feet from me when he nonchalantly turned off of the road and sauntered through the shoulder high hayfields and disappeared, watching me the whole time. I thought that was so strange but exhilarating.

As the seasons change I see plenty of landscape changes as well. Perfect hay is grown here and from what I have been told it is the best around. The cattle have a great life roaming the pastures all summer. I love to watch the

young calves frolic amongst themselves. A couple of times they figured out how to get out of their fenced in pasture to venture to the "greener grass" on the other side of the fence. During the winter and if the snow is not too deep, I pull my grippies over my sneakers and head out. The wind is not too pleasant on some days.

I am disheartened when I see where people have used the dikes as a dumping ground. My husband and I have pulled washing machines, televisions, home insulation, toilet seats plus multiple bags of garbage off of the dikes and I will continue to do so. I saw the remnants of a child's room cleanout dumped over the dikes along with a stroller and a few bikes. It would have been too dangerous for me to retrieve them as they were strategically dumped over the side of the dikes right before a high tide. This person knew his moon cycles but was not very smart! One day I noticed a renovation job that was tossed over the edge as well. The very next day, all that I could see were carpet remnants strewn across and protruding from the beautiful mud flats. Why people do that baffles and angers me to no end.



It's not just I that enjoys the peacefulness and beauty of the marshes. I see many people with or without their four legged friends enjoying this area as well. It is a wonderful place to cool off on a hot day or just a great wide open place to go for a walk. If your dog has plenty of energy, this is the place to go!

Sackville has many wonders, and I could start babbling on about other places but the Tantramar Marshes has to be one my favorite. It's not just a place to go to it's the feeling you get after you've left. Thanks for reading my submission.

Jackie Vanthournout

