

Diversity, special plants make limestone barrens special

Friday
April 13, 2007

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CORNER BROOK The limestone barrens on the Northern Peninsula are home to a wide array of plant life, but few are as precious as Long's braya, barrens willow and Fernald's braya.

Those three species are endangered and are found only within the barrens habitat, which is a tiny area spread over 300 kilometres of coastline near the tip of the peninsula.

Dulcie House, co-ordinator of the Limestone Barrens Habitat Stewardship Program, spoke at the wildlife division building at Brake's Cove in Corner Brook as part of National Wildlife Week.

Today's program features Joe Goudie of the Nunatsiavut government.

House said diversity, along with special plants make the limestone barrens special.

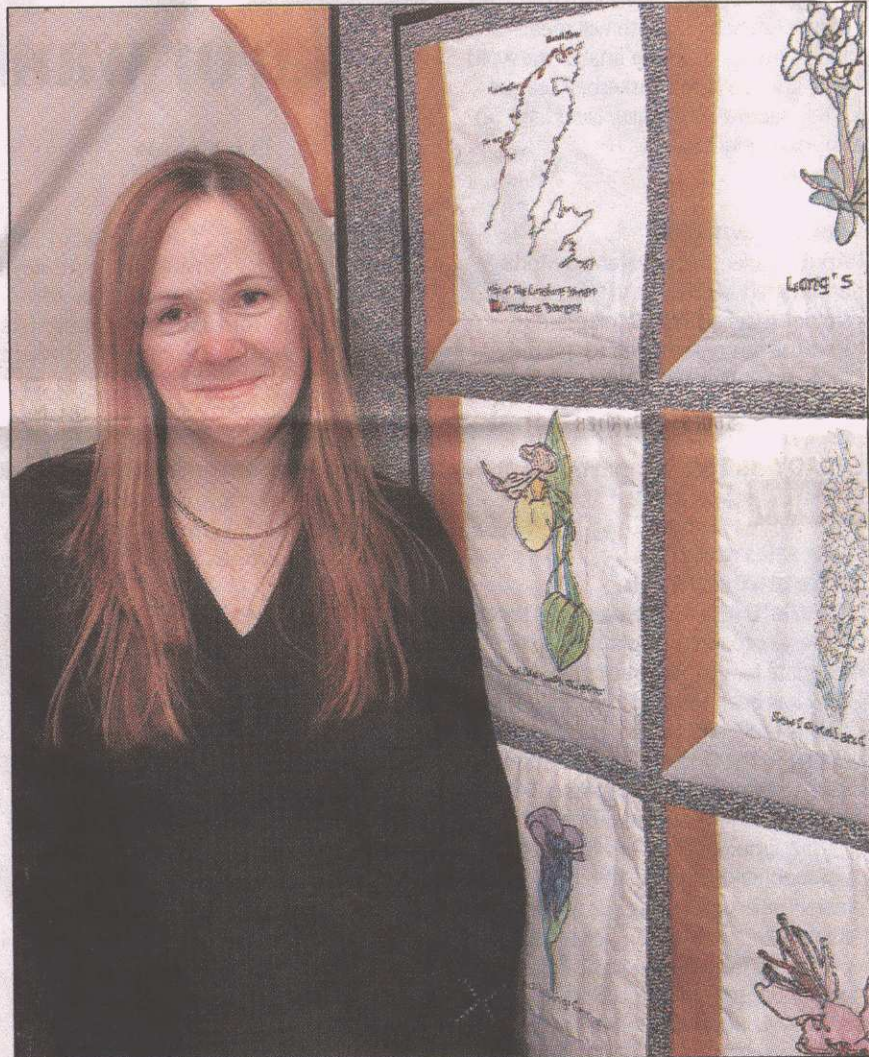
"Listed currently we have 298 vascular plant in the province, we have 104 are listed for the beautiful Northern Peninsula," House said. "That's why the limestone are considered a hotspot for plant diversity for this province.

"There are 22 of these species that are found only on the peninsula — nowhere else in the province — and three found nowhere else in the world."

House said most of the damage to the habitat that's occurring is being done by all terrain vehicles operated by teenagers. She said education is the best way to change behaviours.

And, according to House, the barrens' most striking feature is the species at risk.

"When we consider the fact that we have species here that aren't found



Dulcie House, co-ordinator of the Limestone Barrens Habitat Stewardship Program, says the barrens on the Northern Peninsula are a habitat that supports an array of plant species, including three found nowhere else in the world. — Star Photo by Cliff Wells

anywhere else on earth and the global significance of it, it's one of the most important things when we're bringing our message to local residents," she said. "It's the one thing that when people are made aware of the fact that they have something that's not found

anywhere else in the world, with most people, you see this change in their countenance. It's like this inborn feeling of pride. The habitat itself is considered to be rare and fragile."

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