



# Hammond River Angling Association



## OCTOBER 2016 NEWSLETTER

### Staffing Update

Last month, the Board and staff of HRAA bid farewell to our Executive Director, Sean Doyle. Sean tendered his resignation to pursue his passion of craft beer making by setting up and operating his own microbrewery here in KV ... stay tuned for an announcement in this regard in the coming weeks. Under the direction of our Board of Directors, Sean managed the operations of HRAA for over four years commencing in May 2012. HRAA is grateful to Sean for his leadership and dedication over these past several years and we wish him well in this new endeavour. The Board is also happy to announce that Lee has agreed to assume responsibility for HRAA operations on an interim basis while the Board assesses future staffing requirements.

### Staff Profile- Lee Robinson (Director of Operations)

Lee has been working full time at the HRAA since 2012. She has an MSc in Biology, a BSc. in Environmental Studies and is a certified teacher in New Brunswick. Through the HRAA, she has developed many new lessons and field trips for students to engage their interest in nature, fishing and the environment. Since 2012, Lee has directed the Hammond River Nature Camp and has been involved in all monitoring and restoration projects carried out by the HRAA. Lee has recently assumed the responsibility of Director of Operations for the HRAA. She lives in Lakeside with her husband Aaron, son George and daughter Zoey.



### Staff Profile- Hannah Bradford (Biologist/Research Coordinator)



Hannah joined the HRAA in May 2015. She graduated in 2013 with a BSc. in Environment and Natural Resource Management (specializing in water resources) and is currently in the final stages of completing an MSc. in Biology at UNB. Hannah has become an integral member of the HRAA, leading the Hammond River watershed's newest strategic management plan released in 2016. Hannah has become involved with all on-going projects at the HRAA including restoration work, annual fish and salmon population assessments, and our educational programs. During the winter months, Hannah will help write proposals for future projects, finish up on-going projects, and participate in the educational programs with local schools. Hannah currently lives in Saint John with her partner Bob and her dog, Asia.

### Director of Operation's Report

It has been an exciting fall so far here at the HRAA. Cooler weather and the changing colours have made for a highly enjoyable electrofishing experience this past month. Each year, HRAA staff visit approximately 15 brooks in search of juvenile Atlantic salmon. We also use this opportunity to document the presence of brook trout and other fish species we encounter during these surveys. With extra support from the Wildlife Trust Fund, we were able to visit 17 sites this year. While visiting these sites, we had the opportunity to see some large salmon from a few vantage points. I have also been making a habit of looking out into the river from the deck of the Conservation Centre each morning. I can't believe the size of the some of the striped bass and salmon out there! Now all we need is some rain so they move upstream and spawn!

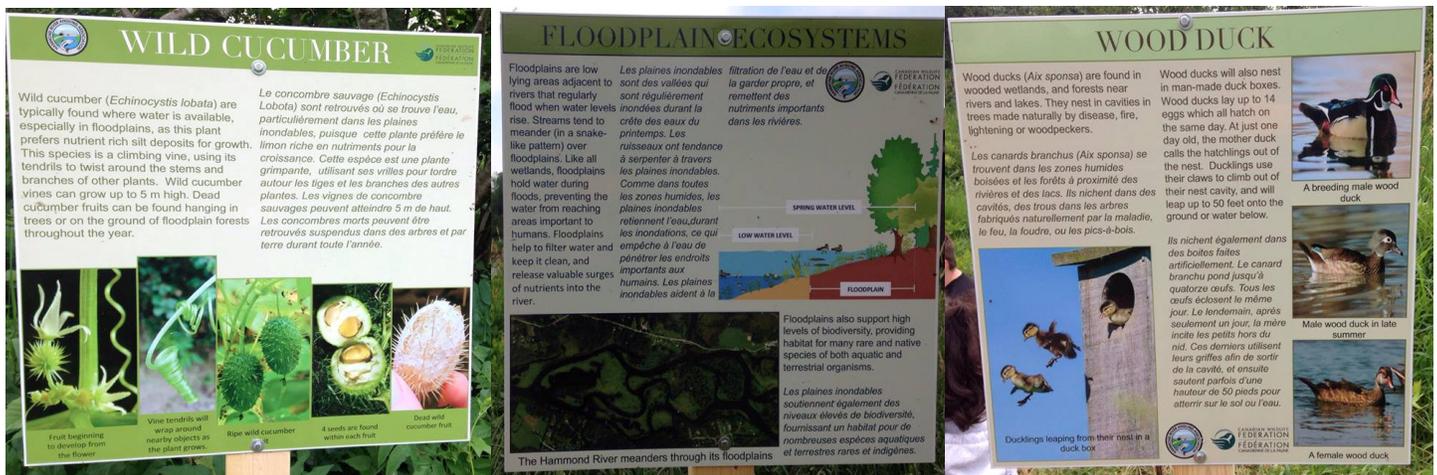
## Director of Operation's Report (cont'd)

As always, the HRAA welcomes classes to participate in our unique education programs. These programs offer a variety of field trip and classroom visits. For details please check our website at [www.hraa.ca](http://www.hraa.ca), call us at 832-1230 or visit us here at the Centre, 10 Porter Road in Nauwigewauk. To book a field trip or classroom visit, please email me at [lee.robinson@hraa.ca](mailto:lee.robinson@hraa.ca)

The HRAA is also brainstorming for ideas for next year's projects! If you have any local conservation issues, suggestions for our education program, or other areas of concern please feel free to contact myself or Hannah via email at [info@hraa.ca](mailto:info@hraa.ca), by calling us at 832-1230 or by stopping in at the Conservation Centre.

## Facilities and Grounds

The HRAA is always trying to improve our facility. In the past year we have undertaken several renovations to our building, including installation of an eco-heat pump. This year we had the opportunity to improve our trail system, which is used by community members, campers, and local students. Trails were reinforced with crushed rock and garbage and recycling bins were installed by the boat launch. We designed and installed several interpretative signs highlighting local flora, fauna and ecosystems as shown below.



## Restoration Projects

HRAA has several restoration projects underway this year. Some of these have originated from ideas coming from you, the membership! These projects will help to mitigate and repair erosion in riparian areas across our watershed and improve habitat for salmon, fish and other aquatic species.

- **Habitat Stewardship Program-** Erosion around Crowley's pool has been a longstanding issue, as local community members have watched the bank slowly creep towards the Stock Farm Road. Last year, when the HRAA asked members to express any ideas or concerns they had in the watershed, this was one of them. This year, the Habitat Stewardship Program has provided funding to hire a consultant to assess the area for the purpose of designing a restoration plan. Updates on this project will be provided via the newsletter and at our next annual general meeting in February. In the long term, we hope to lead an effort that reduces erosion and stabilizes the bank, while improving fish habitat. We also hope that our HRAA membership and any interested individuals from the community continue to bring local issues to our attention... feel free to drop us a line any time!



## Restoration Projects (cont'd)

- **Restoring Atlantic Salmon Habitat in Germaine Brook-** This project, funded by the Recreational Fisheries Conservation Partnership Program (RFCPP), will be completed over the next three years. The project is intended to restore destabilized and eroding banks that stretch over three kilometres in the lower segment of Germaine Brook. The shift in channel and erosion of Germaine Brook has coincided with lower annual juvenile salmon densities and redd counts in the area. In some areas, the banks are over 2.5 m high! Currently the HRAA is working with an engineering firm to complete a site assessment which will be used to guide restoration work over the next 2 years. The HRAA is currently collecting a baseline dataset of water quality around the site to document present site conditions. Next year, the HRAA will solicit volunteers to help with this restoration work.



- **Palmer Brook Enhancement Initiative-** This project, completed this summer, involved planting native trees along the riparian area of lower Palmer Brook, bordering the Old Hampton Highway. Over time this project will help to restore natural crown cover along Palmer Brook, reduce sedimentation and decrease water temperatures in the summer. Sedimentation and high water temperatures correlate with instances of high levels of E. coli in Palmer Brook which have been measured above the limit designated for recreational use twice since 2005. E. coli in Palmer Brook originate from a non-point source, indicating it is likely due to a combination of factors. Through this project, the HRAA hopes to raise awareness about E. coli in this brook and open a discussion with stakeholders about other ways to improve water quality conditions. The HRAA will be meeting with the Town of Quispamsis in the near future to discuss levels of E. coli in Palmer Brook and to seek potential solutions.

- **Floodplain Restoration Project -** Fieldwork for this project, funded by the National Wetland Conservation Fund, was recently completed. This 8.3 hectare property is located across the river from the Conservation Centre. An integral part of this project was the planting of several thousands of trees. To assist staff with planting, we hosted several successful volunteer days in June of this year which were attended by HRAA members, volunteers from the local community and a number of school classes. This project will ultimately return valuable nutrients to the local ecosystem and help provide cool water habitat for fish.



By converting this landscape from fallow farmland



to its natural floodplain habitat, natural processes such as filtration, sediment retention, and floodwater attenuation will be restored. Changes to the ecosystem take about 8 years to become visible from a distance. In the interim, the HRAA will monitor this project, estimating tree survival, wetland species recruitment and the contribution of this project to biodiversity in the area.

## Education Projects

- ***Fish Friends-*** Fish Friends is a program that gives elementary students the chance to see Atlantic salmon eggs hatch first hand in their classrooms. HRAA staff have collaborated with the New Brunswick Salmon Council and the Mactaquac Biodiversity Facility to set aside fertile salmon eggs for 10 schools from Saint John to Sussex. These eggs are delivered to the schools during the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of March. They are kept in specialized aquariums with refrigeration units built in. Within a few weeks, the eggs develop into alevin. Soon after, once their yolk sacs have been depleted, the young fish will be swimming freely as fry. In June, the children were bussed out to our Conservation Centre to release their fish back into the wild and participate in a brief field trip with HRAA staff where they learned about the rest of the Atlantic salmon life cycle.



- ***Public School Education Programs-*** Did you know that the HRAA offers field trips and classroom visits to classes from kindergarten to grade 12? With fishing season ending soon, we have already hosted two classes for a fishing trip. The students dug their own worms and had an opportunity to fish in the pond located on our property. They were also given instruction on how to cast a fly rod before trying their luck in the Hammond River. We have also already visited one class for a fly-tying lesson. Other field trips offered this year include a watershed tour at Hammond River Park and a wetland tour with critter dipping (catching aquatic insects) here at the Conservation Centre. We will also be visiting classes, teaching lessons on birds, amphibians, population monitoring, and benthic macro-invertebrates. We are grateful to have these education projects funded by the New Brunswick Wildlife Trust Fund and the Environmental Trust Fund.



- ***Ducks Unlimited Wetland Trips-*** Once again this year, we welcomed twenty grade 4 classes to the Centre during the month of June. These classes took part in an interactive field trip as part of the Ducks Unlimited Canada “Project Webfoot” program. Students were given a guided tour of our wetland, hunted for aquatic life by “critter dipping” in the river, and played an interactive educational game. All teachers also received an educational package from Ducks Unlimited so they could continue with wetland education in their classrooms.
- ***Sharing Our Nature-*** We are excited to introduce a new project this year called “Sharing our Nature.” Funded by the New Brunswick Wildlife Trust Fund, this education project will bring 10 middle school classes on a guided tour of Hammond River Park off of Reynar Drive in Quispamsis. Students will be introduced to the many natural features of the park (such as plants, animals, ecosystems and geology). After the tour, each class will select one feature and design an interpretive sign on that topic. With help from the HRAA and the Town of Quispamsis, these signs will be edited, printed and permanently installed in Hammond River Park. We hope that students and members of the community enjoy these signs for many years to come! To schedule a field trip or classroom visit, please contact the HRAA via email at [info@hrra.ca](mailto:info@hrra.ca), by calling us at 832-1230 or by stopping in at the Conservation Centre.

## Hammond River Nature Camp

Camp was a great success in 2016. Camper attendance was higher than ever, and for the first time, every week of camp was sold out! Campers enjoyed fishing, fly-fishing, and fly tying. This year one of our campers decided to build his own fishing rod out of a stick, a hook and some spare fishing line that he had found. He took it to the pond and right away, he caught a common shiner. Thus began a new trend. Every kid in camp built their own fishing rod, and the results were amazing. With these homemade rods, we were catching more fish than ever... catfish, yellow perch, sunfish and common shiners. As always, campers got to enjoy activities such as field games, our slip 'n' slide, kayak trips, swimming, fort building, crafts, and building fires. Campers also got to adventure to the local community centre in Nauwigewauk. Here kids played on the playground, and were even able to play ball hockey and soccer baseball. This community centre



is a great resource and we plan to take advantage of this facility regularly next year. We are very grateful for the funding we receive from the Wildlife Trust Fund to operate our summer camp. Our camp program is always improving, and we have many more great ideas for new camp activities in 2017! Stay tuned for details.

## Fly Tying

We are happy to announce that fly tying will be getting underway here at our Conservation Centre in mid-November. Tyers of all ages, beginner or expert, are welcome to attend. Tools, materials and instructions are available for those wanting to try their hand at tying flies or to learn proven patterns for the Hammond and many other rivers. There are always plenty of fish stories being told, so even if you don't tie flies, stop in, grab a coffee and share a few stories of your own. This program is offered every Wednesday night beginning at 6:30 p.m. and is free of charge to HRAA members.



## Scotch 606

Our sixth annual whiskey tasting event, Scotch 606, will happen on February 18th, 2017. This is the next in a series of Scotch/whiskey seminars hosted by HRAA, designed to increase the tasting pleasure of those so inclined. Education will increase the appreciation for this fine spirit. Our presenters this year are Johanne McInnis and Graham MacKenney, both well known whiskey connoisseurs from the Saint John area. This year's event was sold out in September so inquire early for Scotch 707 to be held in 2018.



## **Striped Bass 101** (contributed by Steve Delaney)

Striped bass are one of the most sought after game fish in our region, yet few people know much about their life cycle and even less about their behaviours, especially in our watershed. Very little research has been dedicated to this species in the Saint John River (SJR) system, but this is slowly changing.



The SJR system (which includes the Hammond) has a mix of up to 5 (or more) genetically distinct populations from major rivers in the US such as the Hudson, Delaware, Chesapeake and the Kennebec and from one Canadian river, the Shubenacadie. However, DFO has found striped bass of an unknown origin based on DNA sampling done at the Mactaquac Dam. These bass of unknown origin are presumed to be of SJR origin, however there are no historic samples to compare from native SJR striped bass. Striped bass were reported to have once spawned in the SJR below the present site of the Mactaquac dam, yet no spawning has ever been documented in this area and it is presumed that the changing of the currents, water temperatures and water levels caused by the dam have made this site unsuitable for spawning.

Belleisle Creek was also a known spawning location, but egg samples taken during the last documented spawning activity in 1975 showed that pesticides (DDT family) had caused the membranes of eggs to rupture. These same pesticides are also suggested to have caused the extinction of the St. Lawrence strain of striped bass because the area surrounding Expo 67 was extensively sprayed to control the mayflies “bothering” visitors to the Expo. It is also suggested that there could be many other small spawning populations in the Maritimes that have not been documented and confirmed as of yet. One such location is the Hammond River. I’ve witnessed spawning on two occasions and the location was also confirmed by Hugh Cunningham, a former commercial fisherman who would net this location in the spring for striped bass back in the days when there was a commercial striped bass fishery, often catching bass

between 40 to 70 pounds! Other trustworthy sources have witnessed spawning above Hampton and near Darling’s Island in the Hampton Marsh. One theory is that the Hammond and Kennebecasis Rivers share one distinct population that spawns in different areas from year to year due to inconsistent water conditions during the spawning period.

Spawning is very dependent on water temperature and flow. Water temperatures must be warm enough to quickly hatch the eggs in about 48 hours as they are semi buoyant and must remain suspended in the water column in order to hatch. Due to the erratic water levels and thus water temperatures we experience in the spring (often caused by hydropeaking of the Mactaquac dam), the timing and success of striped bass spawning (as well as many other spring spawning species) in any tributary of the lower Saint John River can be adversely affected.

Striped bass overwinter in our watershed and in at least 3 other main locations in the SJR system. The overwintering groups are composed of striped bass not only from the Hammond and Kennebecasis, but striped bass from the Shubenacadie River as well as some others. Striped bass will begin to migrate to the over wintering areas as the water temperatures cool in the fall and will stay all winter, rarely feeding if at all, until the water temperatures in the spring reach around 10 degrees Celsius; then they will begin to move out in search of food and/or migrate to their native spawning river.



## **Striped Bass 101 (cont'd)**

The variety of populations present in the entire Saint John River system including the Hammond make it difficult to properly assess the total population size of Bay of Fundy origin striped bass and difficult to pinpoint undocumented spawning populations or rediscover small remaining spawning populations once thought to be eradicated. Within individual populations, some age classes and groups have very different habits. Some striped bass will migrate to saltwater to feed, some will roam the rivers and some will stay in freshwater or slightly brackish water for most of the year, rarely travelling far. One very large striper that was tagged and tracked in the Hammond River rarely left. This past spring its tracking tag was discovered washed ashore with debris from the freshet. It was presumed that it died during the spring thaw due to a common occurrence where the fish's air bladder becomes inflated, causing the bass to float to the surface, belly up. The cause of this phenomena has not been discovered as of yet. Not all striped bass die from this condition, but some do and there have been a few large fish kills over the decades. While the striped bass season is all year round in tidal waters and April 15 until October 15 in inland waters, it is important to release bass before June 1 as some or many of the bass remaining in the river during the latter half of May could be some of the few remaining native striped bass that could still be spawning in the Hammond or other local rivers. Canadian stripers are also much slower growing than American striped bass. For example, a 46" striper assumed to be of Canadian origin may be 27 years old, while a 45" striper, assumed to be of American origin may only be 15 years old. Growth rates slow significantly as Striped Bass age. The levels of mercury and other toxins that bioaccumulate also increase with age and the fact that very large Striped Bass make the most significant contributions of eggs and successful genetics during spawning time make a good case for releasing trophy sized striped bass.

Although striped bass appear to be rugged, hardy fish, they are just like any other and if not handled properly, will not survive after release. The use of lip grippers on large striped bass does a lot of damage to the fish when they're lifted out of the water, so it is much better to place the bass in a knotless rubber net for weighing. Dragging a striped bass on to dry ground, mud or sand also removes the fish's slime coat which is vital to keeping parasites and diseases out of the fish's body. The best method is to simply keep the fish in the water or place on wet grass for a picture. If a hero shot must be taken, prepare your camera, quickly take the fish out of the water and properly revive and release after the photo. Very large striped bass that put up a prolonged battle cannot take more than a minute out of water due to exhaustion and the lactic acid build up in their muscles. When using live or dead bait, don't give a striped bass any time to "take" the bait. A striped bass will inhale bait immediately and if given any amount of time after the initial strike, the hook will surely be in the fish's stomach or near the gill rakers.

Not often do anglers luck into large striped bass either, as these fish are generally quite wary. When one striped bass in a school turns away from a lure, it will signal to the other fish to also turn away in most cases. This is why it is important to have a minimalist presentation (e.g. no steel leaders, excessive amounts of snap swivels or brightly colored line tied to the lure), a productive lure, fly or bait and just the right action given to your offering to induce a strike given the conditions at the time. Besides, during cold water periods in the early spring or late fall, it is hard to retrieve a lure or fly too fast to entice a strike. At night, it is a different ball game. The keyword is slow, as striped bass need time to zero in on the location of your offering. A striper's lateral line picks up vibrations in the water and this is why they are so adept at feeding at night. When fishing at night, colors don't matter as much, but the darker the color, the better the silhouette it makes against the night sky. Use

black for surface and subsurface lures and white for lures such as bucktail jigs or large soft plastics that will be retrieved on or near the bottom. During the day, stick with colors that mimic natural prey items such as herring, mackerel or eels. Striped bass have very similar vision to our own and can see color. On occasion, bright colors can entice an aggression strike. Fast, erratic movements and twitches given to a lure or fly will often produce best during the day, especially when using surface baits. It is quite exciting to see a 30lb striper chase and violently attack a popper on the surface!



## Conservation Centre Rental

Our Conservation Centre is located in the heart of KV and overlooks the magnificent Hammond River. It is an ideal location to host your next event; be it a meeting, seminar, corporate retreat, workshop, birthday, anniversary, shower, family reunion, retirement party or just a get-together with friends. Rental rates are very reasonable and HRAA members are entitled to a 20% discount; non-profit groups qualify for a 40% discount.

### **AMENITIES INCLUDE:**

- Seating capacity for up to 92
- Climate controlled
- Fireplace
- Kitchen (2 stoves, fridge, microwave)
- Large wrap-around veranda
- Wheelchair Accessible
- Hardwood floors
- Flipchart
- LCD projector & screen
- Phone
- Podium
- Wi-Fi



*For information on availability and rental rates, please contact Melissa Crilley by calling her at **645-1698** or emailing her at **[melissa.crilley@gmail.com](mailto:melissa.crilley@gmail.com)***

## New Memberships

If you have any friends or family that would like to join the HRAA, please direct them to our website to download a Membership Application Form or have them call the office at 832-1230 to sign up directly. Membership fees are quite reasonable: Youth (under 16) \$5, Regular \$10, Family \$15 and Senior \$5.

## Upcoming Events

- Redd counts will take place on Saturday November 5th. Please email [lee.robinson@hrra.ca](mailto:lee.robinson@hrra.ca) or call the centre at 832-1230 if you are interested in volunteering
- Our weekly fly tying workshops will resume midway through November
- Our Christmas Potluck will be held Sunday afternoon, December 11<sup>th</sup>
- Scotch 606 will take place on February 18, 2017

## Director Profile- Rob Dekany

Rob was born on August 15th, 1975 and has been a lifelong resident of Quispamsis. Rob learned how to cast and fish before he learned how to walk. Growing up, he always had a great passion for fishing and animals and from a young age had a desire to protect these natural resources. Rob studied forestry, graduating from both the Maritime Forest Ranger School in Fredericton and the Conservation Enforcement Program at Holland College in PEI. He has taken a position as a Conservation Officer for the Province of New Brunswick and works in both the Hampton and St. George offices.

## **Director Profile- Rob Dekany (cont'd)**

Rob is very passionate about the Hammond River. Being a Conservation Officer has allowed Rob to enforce the Fish and Wildlife Act as well as the Clean Water and Trespass Act on our beloved Hammond River and help put a stop to many violations which occur. Rob joined the HRAA and offered to serve as a Director at our AGM in February because he very much believes in the efforts undertaken by the association to preserve and protect our precious ecosystem. Just last month, Rob married Carolyn Prebble in a ceremony and reception held at the Conservation Centre. Rob and Carolyn currently live in their home situated on the banks of the Hammond River. Rob is also the proud owner of Maritime Worm which he acquired from Mike Donovan. Maritime Worm was founded by Past-president Jim Gillespie.



*Here's Rob with a 46 inch striped bass he caught earlier this month weighing in at 40 pounds. Rob normally releases all fish, however this fish swallowed the hook too deeply. What a beaut... the fish that is!*

## **Featured fly- Tummel Shrimp** (contributed by Jerome Molloy)

I came across the Tummel Shrimp ten or so years back. I had been a long time believer in shrimp flies for fishing Atlantic salmon and saw one tied by Alistair Gowens, originator of the famous Ally's Shrimp and the Tummel. My first reaction was Wow, I really like the look of that one and so I added several to my arsenal to try on an upcoming salmon fishing trip. I was quite pleased to learn that it is a good pattern all year.

Essentially the fly is a sort of jazzed up Monroe Killer turned shrimp. Some are tied with a black wing although I omit this step, finding it unnecessary. The trick to tying in the hackle is to grab it by the tip using the wool or floss to secure it to the body. Then the rib is wound followed by the hackle. I mentioned in the dressing that the rib and hackle are a total of three turns, done so as to keep the fly as lightly dressed as possible.

Happy Tying & Fishing,

*Jerome*



***Tail:*** Yellow/Orange & Black Bucktail mixed with a few strands of Krystal Flash

***Rib:*** Oval Gold Tinsel (three turns)

***Body:*** Black Floss or Wool

***Hackle:*** Orange Cock (three turns)

***Collar Hackle:*** Dyed Kingfisher Grizzly Hen (2-3 turns)

## HRAA Board of Directors and Committee Chairs

### Executive Committee

President: Jody Middleton      Secretary: Joe Tilley  
1st VP: JC Cormier      Treasurer: Ian McGavney  
2nd VP: Adam Chateauvert      Past-Pres.: Derrick Mitchell

### Directors

Hardy Cameron      Rob Dekany      Andy Miller  
Al Guay      Jim Gillespie      Steve Delaney

### Committee Chairs

Annual Dinner & Auction: Melissa Crilley  
Membership: Paul Daigle  
Maintenance: Al Guay  
Hammond River Classic: JC Cormier  
Newsletter: Paul Daigle

### HRAA's Office Location:

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### Office Hours:

9:00 am – 5:00 pm  
Monday to Friday

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