

INSIDE: TAKE THE BRUCE TRAIL PLEDGE

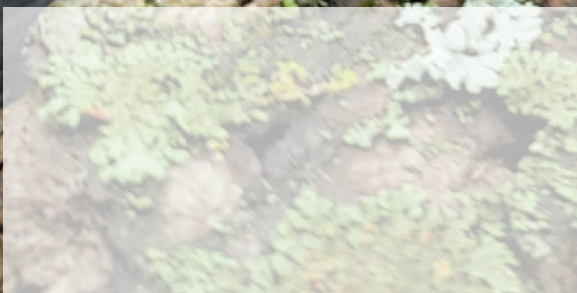
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Bruce Trail

C O N S E R V A N C Y

MAGAZINE

Exploring & Preserving
Niagara
Escarpment
Biodiversity



Our Mission

Preserving a ribbon
of wilderness, for
everyone, forever.



Bruce Trail
CONSERVANCY

FALL 2021



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Cover photo:

Yellow Deer Mushroom at BTC's Hemlock Ridges Nature Reserve.
Photo by Richard Smythe, BTC citizen science volunteer.

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Chief Executive Officer's Message



The more I explore the Bruce Trail, the more I am struck by the beautiful variety of landscapes along our footpath.

One hike along the Trail is never the same as the next. One section can have completely different sights, sounds and smells than another. Walking the Trail is a simple yet very tangible way to experience the biodiversity of the Niagara Escarpment.

Through my camera lens, I try to capture some of this diversity - from the tiniest insects to the vastness of the forest. It's an ongoing challenge and pleasure that helps me focus on the natural world we are working to conserve.

Yet, I know there is more to biodiversity than meets the eye and the camera lens. More than just visual splendour. More than simply a count of species. More than incredibly rare creatures. Biodiversity is the myriad ways in which the natural world is varied - at

the genetic, species and ecosystem levels. This variety begets complex relationships between organisms, and provides ecosystem services that support us all. And most importantly, it is under threat because of human activity.

In this issue of Bruce Trail Conservancy Magazine we've put the spotlight on biodiversity. In these pages you'll read about what makes the Niagara Escarpment so biodiverse, why this diversity is important to the future of our communities, and how our staff and volunteers are working to assess and conserve it. You'll head on a tour of nine of our BTC protected natural areas to explore this extraordinary diversity, and you'll read tips on what we can all do to reduce biodiversity loss every day.

Preserving biodiversity is at the core of our conservation work at the Bruce Trail Conservancy and I'm incredibly proud of our efforts, our approach and our success. The Bruce Trail Conservancy has conserved more than 12,700 acres of vulnerable habitat in Ontario since its inception. We actively add to that

conserved land each year, protecting spaces and species. We strategically seek to connect protected areas, creating continuous natural corridors that will help build resilience in the face of climate change. And throughout the year we responsibly connect people to the diversity of the Escarpment through our footpath.

This fall, I'm looking forward to connecting even more people to the Niagara Escarpment, the Bruce Trail and our protected areas through our Bruce Trail Pledge (see page 6) and our new Bruce Trail App (see page 24). Both of these exciting projects will engage people in our work in new ways.

As you explore the Bruce Trail this fall, and marvel at the remarkable fall colours, take joy in the incredible diversity around you both in nature and in our local communities. •

Michael McDonald,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Photo: Michael McDonald

Take the Bruce Trail Pledge

This October, we invite all who care about the Bruce Trail to commit to doing one of five simple yet powerful actions to support the Trail and the work of the BTC:

- **Leave the Trail better than you found it.**
Practice leave no trace principles. Commit to safely picking up litter on your hike.
- **Share your plant & wildlife sightings.**
Collect important biodiversity data as you hike, and learn more about Niagara Escarpment species as a citizen science volunteer.
- **Be an ambassador.**
Share your love of the Bruce Trail and encourage others to support the Bruce Trail Conservancy. Share this issue of Bruce Trail Magazine.
- **Build an inclusive outdoors.**
Be an active part of making the outdoors safe and welcoming for all identities and abilities.
- **Support conservation with a gift.**
Make a donation to the Bruce Trail Conservancy and support the preservation and stewardship of Niagara Escarpment land.

To learn how these actions can make a difference, to find ideas, tips and resources, and to take the pledge, visit brucetrail.org/pages/bruce-trail-pledge

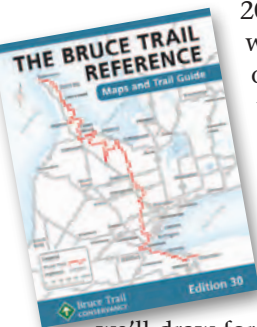
Bruce Trail Pledge Button & Weekly Prize Draws

As our thanks to you for taking action with the Pledge, we'll send you a Bruce Trail Pledge

2021 button. Wear it with pride and let others know why you took the pledge.

Take the pledge and you'll also be entered to win a BTC prize (your choice of a Bruce Trail Reference Guide or our BTC socks + pins package).

Each week in October, we'll draw for a prize among all pledge takers. The sooner you take the pledge, the more chances you'll have to win.



Share the Bruce Trail Pledge

With each person who takes the Bruce Trail Pledge, our community grows. As our community grows, our collective capacity to preserve a ribbon of wilderness increases.

With each action, we are making a positive difference in the future of our beloved Bruce Trail and in the conservation of the irreplaceable Niagara Escarpment. •



Exploring & Preserving Niagara Escarpment Biodiversity



Photo: John Whitworth

The Niagara Escarpment is a spectacular geological formation that has created a mosaic of ecological systems, habitats, and species unlike anywhere else in the world.

Exploring the Escarpment along the Bruce Trail will take you on a journey through this diversity. From woodlands and wetlands, to cliff edges and talus slopes, to rare alvars and scenic shorelines. These diverse habitats support thousands of species, including over one third of Ontario's at risk species.

Exploring the Trail is a gateway to understanding and preserving this biodiversity.

As a UNESCO World Biosphere, the Niagara Escarpment is internationally recognized for its biodiversity and for the important role local communities have had in its protection. Ecosystems of the Niagara Escarpment support species that coexist alongside the most densely populated and heavily developed region in Canada. Biodiversity here is threatened by habitat loss and fragmentation, invasive species, pollution, unsustainable use, and climate change.

We depend on the Escarpment's biodiversity for our health, our economy, our enjoyment, and our cultural heritage. It is crucial that we work together to address current issues which threaten biodiversity and to build resilience to those that emerge in the future. Balancing human activities and nature protection is a delicate, ongoing process.

The Bruce Trail Conservancy works to find that balance. Through habitat protection and stewardship, connecting people responsibly to nature, and engaging communities in conservation action, the BTC plays a leading role in reducing biodiversity

loss and advancing its recovery.

In this issue of Bruce Trail Conservancy Magazine, we highlight the remarkable variety of life on the Escarpment, the work being done to preserve it, and ways you can explore and support its protection.

What makes the Niagara Escarpment so diverse?

The Niagara Escarpment is the dominant landform in southern Ontario and a biodiversity hotspot. Its topography and calcareous soils, together with the climatic influences of the Great Lakes, create a variety of habitats and conditions that in turn support thousands of unique species. In fact the Niagara Escarpment boasts the highest level of species diversity among all 19 Canadian biosphere reserves.

ESCARPMENT ECOSYSTEMS SUPPORT:



• **1,500** species of plant (including 50 fern and 40 orchid species)

• **350** species of birds



• **90** species of fish



• **53** species of mammals



• **36** species of reptiles and amphibians

• **Plus** countless fungi, lichens, and invertebrates



A Tour of Escarpment Biodiversity

through Bruce Trail Conservancy Nature Reserves

Photo: Brian Popeliter

From the Niagara River to the tip of the Saugeen (Bruce) Peninsula, the Bruce Trail Conservancy protects and stewards over 12,700 acres of Niagara Escarpment land. These areas preserve a diverse array of habitats – including forests, wetlands, caves, meadows, scarp edges and alvars – and provide home for over 86 species of conservation concern.

Let us take you on a tour of this remarkable biodiversity. On this armchair trip, you'll visit nine BTC Nature Reserves – one in each of our

Bruce Trail Club sections. On each stop you'll encounter another element in the rich mosaic of ecozones, habitats and creatures that make up our ribbon of

wilderness and learn about some of the ways we are working to enhance and preserve its precious biodiversity.

St. Paul Nature Reserve – *Protecting Carolinian Canada* Niagara section, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Map 1 | 10 acres

Our first stop on this Escarpment biodiversity tour is just 6 km from the southern tip of the Bruce Trail. Here in the cooling forests of the BTC's St. Paul Nature Reserve we see clues that we are in a special place. Sassafras groves, Tulip Trees and Carolina Wren tell us we are in the Carolinian life zone – Canada's most diverse and fragile ecoregion. The Carolinian zone makes up only 1% of Canada's land area yet it has the greatest number of flora and fauna species than any other ecoregion in Canada, including 65% of Ontario's rare species. Stretching from Windsor to Toronto, the Carolinian zone sits within Ontario's most densely populated region, making protected areas like St. Paul Nature Reserve vital for the preservation of unique species and habitats.

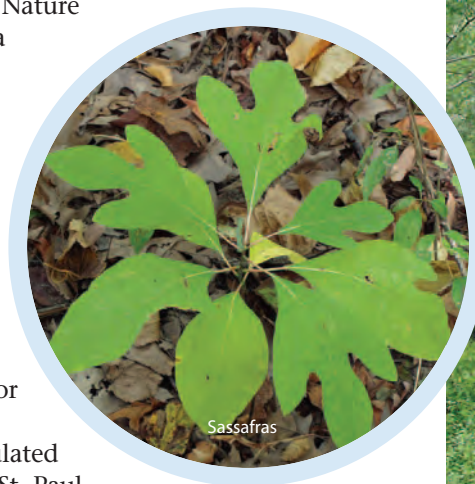
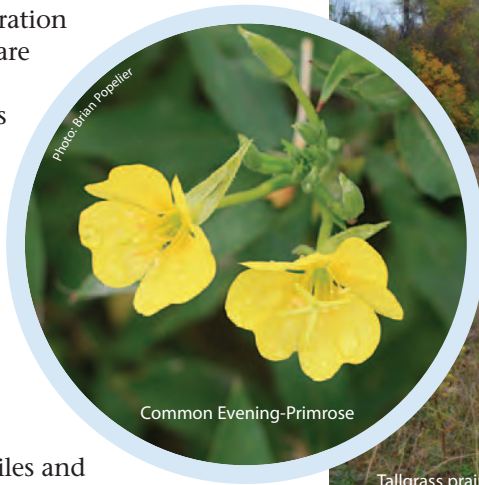


Photo: Brian Popeliter

Fisher's Pond Nature Reserve – Rare Tallgrass Prairie

Iroquoia section, Burlington, Map 9 | 87 acres

At the edge of the rapidly growing city of Burlington, near the northern limit of the Carolinian zone, we find an 87-acre oasis. With mature Sugar Maple forests, riparian areas, and a naturalized pond, there is wonderful variety to be explored at Fisher's Pond. But don't overlook that field – it's the site of the BTC's first tallgrass prairie restoration project. Tallgrass communities are some of the most endangered ecosystems in Canada, with less than 3% of their original extent remaining in Ontario. In 2019 this area was seeded with a mix of native prairie grasses and wildflowers. Restoring this increasingly rare ecosystem will improve soil quality, increase Niagara Escarpment biodiversity, and provide important habitat for grassland birds, mammals, reptiles and pollinators.



Common Evening-Primrose



Tallgrass prairie at Fisher's Pond

Springle Nature Reserve – Biodiversity Restoration in Action

Toronto section, Limehouse, Map 12 | 38 acres

As you walk the Todd Bardes Meadowlands Side Trail at Springle Nature Reserve you may notice a curious sight: a shallow plate on a short post filled with rocks and water. This is a water station for Monarch butterflies (threatened in Ontario) and is just one of the many signs of the restoration efforts of the Toronto Bruce Trail Club Biodiversity Team at Springle Nature Reserve. This dedicated volunteer crew has been working to increase biodiversity on the property through plantings, invasive species control, and special wildlife structures. Look carefully and you may also see tarps on the ground where patches of old agricultural fields will be replanted with wildflowers. Or you may notice shrubs hanging upside-down from tree branches where volunteers have pulled invasive Common Buckthorn and left it to dry so that it would not re-root and spread. And over in those birdboxes, you may find nesting Eastern Bluebirds or Tree Swallows. These ongoing efforts are a wonderful example of the committed volunteer corps that makes our conservation work possible all along the Niagara Escarpment.



Monarchs



Common Milkweed at Springle

Quarryside Nature Reserve – *Nature Regenerating* Caledon Hills section, Inglewood, Map 14 | 34 acres

In the rolling Caledon Hills, we reach a spot that reminds us of the pressures of resource extraction on the Niagara Escarpment. Quarryside Nature Reserve was an active quarry site for valuable Whirlpool Sandstone from the late 1800s until the 1970s. Despite this drastic disturbance, the ponds and piles of rocky material left by quarrying operations are showing signs of natural regeneration. BTC volunteers and staff have observed nesting Midland Painted Turtles, salamanders and newts at various life stages, and 22 regionally rare species on the property. Though there is no trail currently on Quarryside Nature Reserve, it is an important part of the Bruce Trail Conservancy's long-term conservation efforts and is being actively managed to support its regeneration.



Splitrock Narrows Nature Reserve – *Life Among the Rocks* Dufferin Hi-Land section, Mono, Map 19 | 63 acres

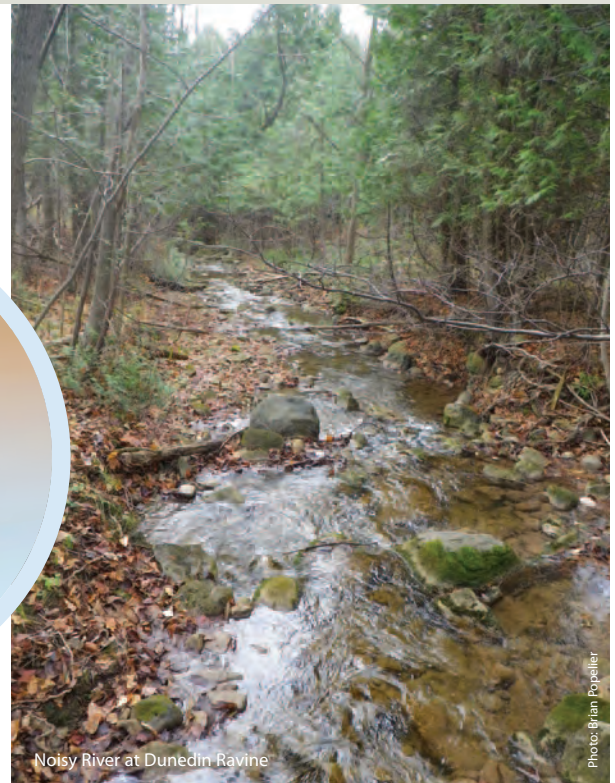
As you walk along the Narrows Side Trail, the rock walls of the impressive Splitrock crevice rise up to either side of you. Escarpment crevices like this support distinct species of ferns and mosses that grow best in these cool, damp, rocky conditions. Splitrock Narrows Nature Reserve features an extensive crevice and cave system created by the frost wedging of the Escarpment dolostone, and the gradual shifting downward of huge slabs of rock over long periods of time. Much of the cave system here, not accessible to the public, provides important habitat for the endangered Little Brown Myotis (a.k.a. Little Brown Bat). These crucial insectivores help keep insect populations in check but are under serious threat due to the pesticide use, habitat destruction, and a deadly fungal disease, White Nose Syndrome.



Dunedin Ravine Nature Reserve – Freshwater Lifeline

Blue Mountains section, Lavender, Map 21 | 79 acres

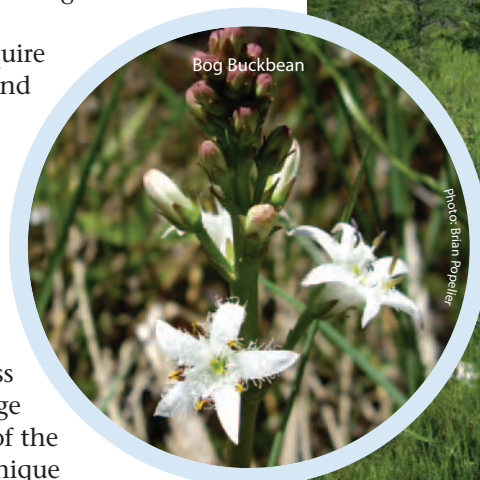
A flash of blue and a splash draws our attention as we enter Dunedin Ravine Nature Reserve. A Belted Kingfisher has just scooped a Crayfish from the waters of the Noisy River. The Noisy River is a coolwater stream. Many aquatic organisms prefer specific temperature ranges, and a cool water stream offers habitat for a mix of coldwater and warmwater species. The Eastern Cedars and Balsam Poplars along the banks of the river through the ravine provide shade and help regulate the water temperatures. They also provide important habitat for Spring Peepers and Wood Frogs that need both wooded areas and water bodies to complete their life cycles. Rivers and streams are vital freshwater links through the Niagara Escarpment, and their surrounding riparian zones are biologically rich. However, these habitats remain extremely vulnerable to climatic change, and are continually threatened by changes in land and water use patterns, making their protection ever more important.



Campbell Nature Reserve – Fantastic Fen

Beaver Valley section, Blantyre, Map 28 | 77 acres

Atop the western slope of the scenic Beaver Valley we reach Campbell Nature Reserve – a wetland wonder. Six distinct wetland types are protected here including a fen, a particularly rare and diverse type of wetland. Fens are peat-forming wetlands that rely on water and nutrients from groundwater, require thousands of years to develop, and cannot easily be restored once destroyed. Unlike bogs, which are also peat-based wetlands, fens are fed by slowly flowing nutrient-rich water making them more productive. Among the grasses, sedges and wildflowers, look for the white tufts of Green-keeled Cottongrass or the red berries of the rare Large Cranberry. These are just a few of the species supported by the fen's unique conditions.



Kemble Rock & Kemble Wetland Nature Reserves – Avian Delights

Sydenham section, Kemble, Map 34 | 345 acres

Have your binoculars handy for this stop in our tour. The sheer variety of habitats found at Kemble Rock and Kemble Wetland Nature Reserves make it a wonderful place to birdwatch. There are 15 distinct ecosites in these adjoining nature reserves including varieties of deciduous forest, thickets, marshes, swamps, meadows, and treed talus and cliffs.

Birds are well adapted to specific habitats, and their presence can help to identify and highlight habitat variety. In the thickets you may spot the Brown Thrasher or Blue-winged Warbler. In the marsh, look for circling Sandhill Cranes, with their distinct prehistoric call and massive wingspan. A Red-winged Blackbird is a sure sign that water is nearby. And the distinct laughing call of the Pileated Woodpecker may indicate 'interior forest' - a wooded tract that is at least 100 m from a forest edge. Birds, and breeding birds in particular, are good indicators of ecosystem health and biodiversity. Protecting a variety of habitats, like those we find at Kemble Rock and Wetland Nature Reserves, is the best way to ensure that biodiversity is preserved.



Photo: Brian Popeljer

Sandhill Crane



Wetland at Kemble

Photo: Ron Savage

Johnstone Nature Reserve – Globally Rare Alvar

Peninsula section, Dyer's Bay, Map 40 | 350 acres

Let's take a loop through our final nature reserve on the Juniper Flats Side Trail. It's aptly named. Stretching before us is an open area dotted with low lying juniper shrubs. This is an alvar – a flat area of limestone bedrock covered by little to no soil. Alvars are globally rare habitats. Ontario is home to 75% of North America's alvars, most of which are found on the Saugeen (Bruce) Peninsula and Manitoulin Island. Although they may look sparse, alvars are far from barren. They are home to myriad distinctive plants and animals which must be adapted to very little soil and alternating periods of flood and drought. Here in this 'shrub alvar', under the Common Juniper, you may find the brilliant Paint-cup Paintbrush, Balsam Ragwort, and an unusual assemblage of lichens and mosses. Another rare inhabitant of the alvar and other rocky Escarpment habitats is the Massasauga Rattlesnake, an oft-persecuted species at risk, whose habitat is protected here at Johnstone Nature Reserve.



Photo: Brian Popeljer

Massasauga Rattlesnake



Alvar at Johnstone

Photo: Brian Popeljer

Though we've reached the end of our tour, there is so much more Niagara Escarpment biodiversity to explore. These areas represent just a few of the many spaces and species you are helping to protect with your support of the Bruce Trail Conservancy.





Using Citizen Science to Understand Biodiversity

Bruce Trail Conservancy's iNaturalist Project

By Mara McHaffie, BTC Ecologist

Much of our work at the Bruce Trail Conservancy involves conserving and celebrating the unique biodiversity of the Niagara Escarpment. But in order to preserve biodiversity along our conservation corridor, we need to understand it.

Answers to questions such as “What kinds of plants and animals live along the Bruce Trail?”, “Where are sensitive species living?” and, “Are invasive species spreading to new areas?” help us to more effectively steward Niagara Escarpment habitats and identify areas where conservation action is needed.

Our conservation team spends a lot of time in the field trying to answer those questions with formal methods such as breeding bird and vegetation surveys. However, the Bruce Trail is approximately 900 km long, and the Bruce Trail Conservancy manages over 12,700 acres of land. That’s a lot of ground to cover for three staff ecologists.

Enter ‘citizen science’, in which community members participate in research and monitoring to further scientific knowledge. One of the key ideas behind citizen science projects is that many hands make light work, and everyone can contribute to scientific

knowledge with the right tools. This is certainly true when it comes to the BTC’s iNaturalist project, which documents biodiversity along the Bruce Trail corridor.

iNaturalist: A Citizen Science Platform

iNaturalist is a citizen science website and app where people can share observations of living things anywhere in the world. The BTC iNaturalist Project, which started in 2018, collects iNaturalist observations from along the Bruce Trail, helping us to understand what organisms are living along the Niagara Escarpment, and where and when they are found.

Citizen science volunteers simply join the project and upload photos and audio recordings of living things they encounter along the trail. iNaturalist uses artificial intelligence to suggest the identification of the organism, and other iNaturalist users can offer their suggestions as well. The ability for iNaturalist users to view each other’s observations, comment and

suggest identifications creates a sense of community and allows nature enthusiasts to connect with and learn from one

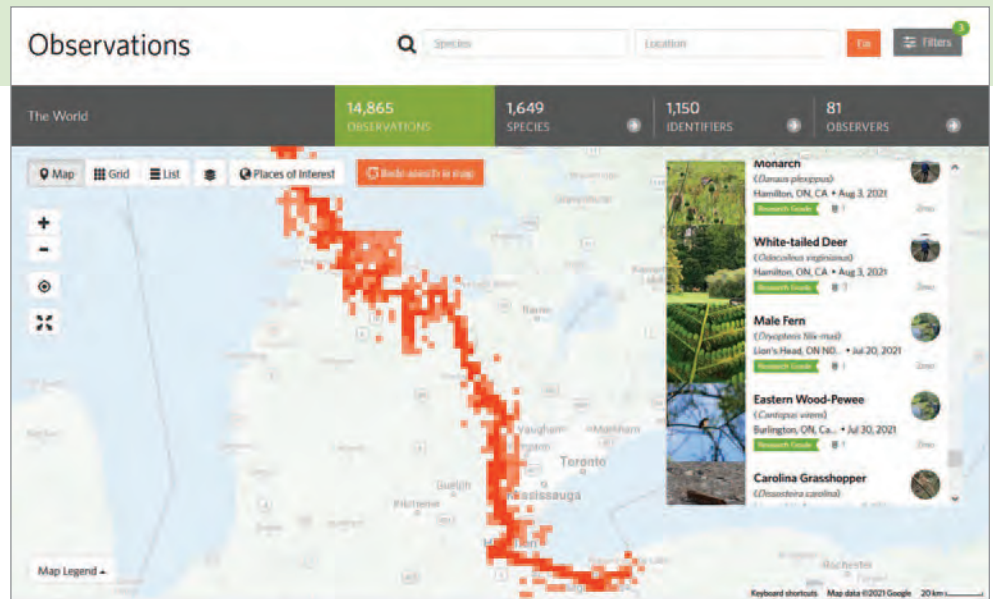


another. All the while, their observations contribute to a vast dataset that researchers can use.

Our Results to Date

As of August 4, 2021, the BTC iNaturalist Project had collected a remarkable 14,854 observations of 1,651 species made by 80 citizen scientists. By the time you read this, those numbers will have grown with another summer's worth of observations from BTC volunteers.

Results so far have included an incredible diversity of observations from five different kingdoms of life: plants, animals, fungi, and even protozoans and bacteria.



BTC iNaturalist Project By the Numbers

14,854 Observations
of
1,651 Species
including
22 Species of
Conservation Concern
made by
80 Citizen Science Volunteers
as of August 4, 2021

The most common observations by far have been of plants – over 75% of all observations to date. The BTC project

includes observations of over 900 species from 159 different plant families, including tiny mosses, ferns, wildflowers and towering trees.

This is not surprising, for a few reasons. The Niagara Escarpment is home to over 1,500 species of vascular plants. Their sedentary nature makes them easy for anyone to observe and record. And in the first year of the BTC iNaturalist Project, we were collecting only plant observations before broadening out to all kingdoms of life.

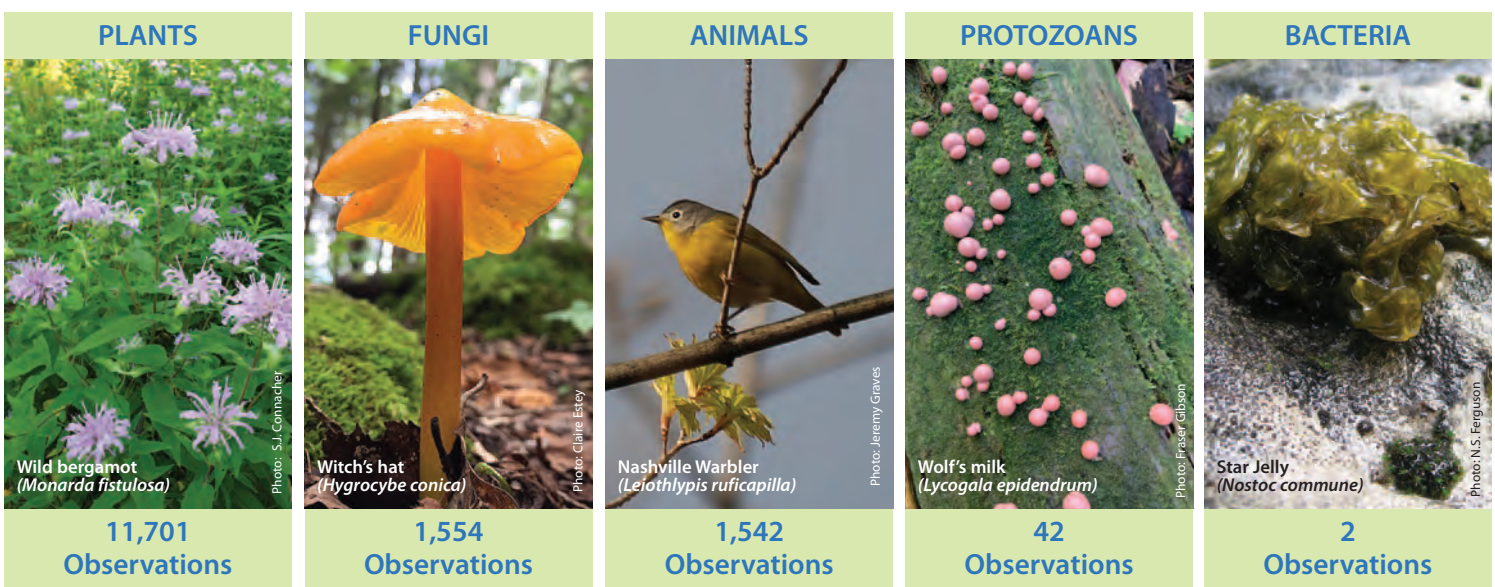
Fungi and animals have each accounted for approximately 10% of all observations. Birds and insects have been the most popular animals observed, followed by mammals, amphibians and reptiles. But citizen scientists have also included observations of less charismatic

animals, like millipedes and snails.

The remainder of the observations were of more cryptic and often overlooked groups of organisms – protozoans and bacteria. Most of the protozoans observed were slime molds, which often resemble fungi but are actually single-celled organisms that can aggregate together to form the mushroom-like structures that we can see.

While there were only two observations of bacteria, one of those bacteria, called a phytoplasm, causes a phenomenon that may be familiar to some Bruce Trail hikers: green leaf-like stripes on the petals of White Trillium. Look for this next spring in your favourite patch of Trilliums (and if you see one, consider adding it to our project).

iNaturalist Observations on the Bruce Trail - by Kingdom



Species Spotlight: Butternut

The most commonly observed species in the BTC iNaturalist Project has been Butternut, with 233 observations. Despite its abundance in the project, the Butternut tree is actually an endangered species. It is endangered due to the Butternut Canker, a fungus that infects and kills the tree by restricting the flow of water and nutrients. The canker can be recognized by the dark, sooty patches it creates on the bark.

Observations of this species are very useful, because we assess individual Butternut trees for signs of resistance to the Butternut Canker. Resistant trees may be valuable for recovery programs that aim to introduce resistant varieties of Butternut back into the ecosystem.



For this reason, many trail and stewardship volunteers have learned to identify Butternut and add it to the BTC iNaturalist project.

Seeking Sensitive Species

The Butternut is not the only species at risk recorded on our iNaturalist project. Citizen scientists have observed 22 different species at risk, including threatened grassland bird species such as Bobolinks and Meadowlarks, and limestone-loving plant species, such as the American Hart's-tongue Fern. Many species at risk are in decline due to habitat loss, so understanding where they occur is important for prioritizing habitat conservation and restoration actions. For example, if Bobolinks are observed on a BTC property, we may undertake grassland restoration on that property to improve their nesting habitat.



Bobolink (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*)

Tracking Invasive Species

The iNaturalist project is also a good way to track invasive species, which are non-native species that have a negative impact on local ecosystems. Aside from the native Butternut, the invasive plants Common Buckthorn, European Swallowwort (a.k.a. dog strangling vine) and Garlic Mustard were the most commonly observed species in the project, with 169, 143 and 127 observations, respectively. These plants tend to outcompete native plants, reducing biodiversity and causing profound shifts in a variety of ecosystem components, from soil chemistry to fungal networks. Tracking these invasive species can help us to act quickly when species spread to new locations along the Trail, and to prioritize areas for management.

For example, in 2019, a new invasive plant species called Japanese Stiltgrass was found along the Bruce Trail in Short Hills Provincial Park. For now, the plant is contained within the park and management is ongoing. However, there is a risk that this plant could spread outside the park along the Trail. Uploading observations of this plant to iNaturalist can help us track its spread and remove any new occurrences before the spread becomes unmanageable.

What iNaturalist Data Reveals and Doesn't Reveal

Citizen science has the power to transform biodiversity research. But it is important to keep in mind some of the limitations of an approach like iNaturalist



Japanese Stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*)

before drawing conclusions based on the data. Its unsystematic and uneven sampling effort over space and time can introduce biases. For example, we've got lots of observations from around the Hamilton area in the spring and fall. This likely reveals more about where and when people are choosing to hike than it does about the abundance of various species around Hamilton. iNaturalist observations are also heavily weighted to those organisms that are easily detectible and easily photographed, and to those locations that are easily accessible. And iNaturalist data confirms presence, not

absence. So, the lack of an observation in an area does not mean that species is not found there.

But as long as we're aware of these things, we can still make use of the extraordinary dataset created by a network of observant nature enthusiasts. Citizen scientists are making it possible to document where species occur on an unprecedented scale, allowing scientists and conservationists to understand species' ranges and habitats in a way that would not be possible without so many eyes looking out for nature.

Your Sightings Can Make a Difference

The BTC iNaturalist Project is a wonderful tool for monitoring and learning more about the unique biodiversity of the Niagara Escarpment. If you haven't joined the project yet, we encourage you to get involved. Whether you're a trained expert or just interested in learning more about the life around you, we can use your help. You can learn more by visiting brucetrail.org (Get Involved > Volunteering > Citizen Science) or by emailing mcroll@brucetrail.org.

Thank you to our amazing community of citizen scientists who have contributed observations and have dedicated their time and energy to help build our understanding of biodiversity along the Niagara Escarpment. •



American Hart's-tongue Fern (*Asplenium scolopendrium* var. *americanum*)

Conservation in Action: New Protected Areas

In our efforts to protect and connect vital ecosystems, and secure a home for the Bruce Trail into the future, the Bruce Trail Conservancy created two new protected natural areas earlier this year. These areas will help us further preserve, enhance and explore the biodiversity of the Niagara Escarpment.

Speyside Sanctuary (expansion) – Toronto section *Halton Hills, Map 12*

3.5 acres

690 m of Bruce Trail Optimum Route

Located on 4th Line in Halton Hills near Limehouse Conservation Area, this new BTC property adds 3.5 acres to the existing Speyside Sanctuary (preserved in 2009 with BTC donor support). With this expansion, a nearly continuous 11 km stretch of Bruce Trail has been protected between the community of Speyside and our Maple Ridge Nature Reserve.

Though relatively small, this 20-metre wide natural corridor shows remarkable biodiversity. Birds not yet recorded in the area, like the Orchard Oriole, have already been spotted. Remnants of rare Tallgrass prairie dot the property, and wildflowers including Trillium, Spotted St. John's-wort, and

Echinacea, provide sustenance for pollinators. This corridor will now be protected in perpetuity and provide safe access between natural spaces for hikers and for wildlife.



Blantyre Springs Nature Reserve – Beaver Valley section

Blantyre Springs Nature Reserve – Beaver Valley section

Blantyre, Map 28

33 acres

604 m of Bruce Trail Optimum Route

Near Rocklyn Creek Management Area, on the border of the Beaver Valley and Sydenham Club sections, sits Blantyre Springs Nature Reserve. A key connector property for the Bruce Trail, it provides a permanent home for 614 m of main Trail and safeguards a continuous natural corridor in the area. A small stream winds its way through mature maple and beech forests. Species at risk including Butternut trees and Monarch butterflies have already been recorded on the property.

The Beaver Valley Bruce Trail Club has created a new, carefully-designed parking area at the edge of the property with a capacity for up to 9 cars, and rerouted the trail to connect to it (see our Trail Notices in this issue, page 23). The new parking area will help to manage an increase of visitors to the area, ease trail congestion, and provide safe access to the nature reserve. •



Speyside Sanctuary (expansion) – Toronto section

Hikers are always surprised

By Ruth Patterson

Based on the poem "I wanted to be surprised" by Jane Hirschfield

Each walk in the woods
a surprise:

a woodpecker,
rat-tat-tat, castanet
breaks the white stillness
of winter.



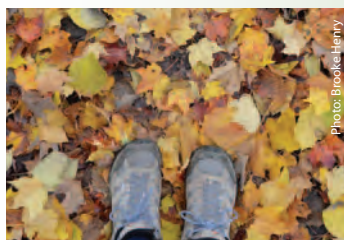
Spring peepers,
suddenly raucous,
blue kohosh and trout lily-
the surprise
of wild leeks,
up a hill.



The shock
of summer heat,
brooks that bubble green
instead of blue,
an orchestra of mosquitoes,
under a canopy
of lush leaves.



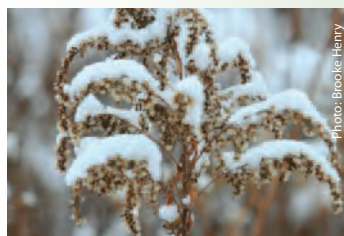
Our dry fall footsteps,
crash and startle,
as tree by tree,
leaf by leaf,
a technicolor world
unfolds, then fades
into brown.



The whole show ends
as each tree,
slowly,
flings off its foliage-
only skeletons
are left.



It's never a surprise
when the first snowflake arrives,
and catches-
on a child's tongue
on the last bird wing
on the bumper of an RV heading south.



Submit your Bruce Trail Story

Our Bruce Trail community
abounds with stories.

We want to hear yours. Submit
your story to us at any time
online or by email and you may
see it featured in an upcoming
issue of Bruce Trail Magazine.
Essay, poem, lyrics, journal,
blog - your story can take any
of these forms.

Details at [brucetrail.org/pages/
your-bruce-trail-story](http://brucetrail.org/pages/your-bruce-trail-story) or contact
communications@brucetrail.org

Kids Corner

Kids are great biodiversity detectives! As careful observers of our natural world, you often notice things along the Bruce Trail that adults have missed.

Three Biodiversity Resources for Kids

1. Biodiversity & Me: A Bruce Trail guide to the biodiversity of the Niagara Escarpment.

This downloadable PDF guide features checklists, a hike log and habitat descriptions. Visit brucetrail.org/pages/resources/niagara-escarpment/flora-fauna to download your copy.



2. Seek app by iNaturalist:

Though iNaturalist is already pretty kid-friendly, Seek takes it to the next level. Not only can you use Seek to help identify the species you photograph, you can also earn badges for seeing different types of birds, amphibians, plants, and fungi and participate in monthly observation challenges. No registration involved, no user data is collected, and your location is obscured. Visit inaturalist.org/pages/seek_app for details.

3. Biodiversity ID sheets from the University of Guelph Arboretum:

These double-sided, 11 X 17 inch, laminated biodiversity sheets let you see lots of colourful photographs at once to help you identify animals and plants of southern Ontario. Visit arboretum.uoguelph.ca/educationandevents/id-sheets to order yours.

Mckinley K. (11 years old) submitted this drawing of a Pileated Woodpecker, one of many birds he's encountered on the Bruce Trail.

Mckinley and his mom Jenn, dad Keenan, and sister Kenzie, love spotting birds and often use the Merlin App to help identify what birds they see and hear on the Bruce Trail. Their sightings have included Cedar Waxwings, peewees, chickadees, blue jays, cardinals, sparrows, veeries, goldfinches, sandhill cranes, egrets, turkeys, vultures and many more.



Mckinley

KIDS' CORNER SUBMISSIONS

Kids, do you have a drawing, poem, story, photo, hike review, or other creation inspired by the Bruce Trail? We'd love to share it in an upcoming Kids' Corner. Send your creations to communications@brucetrail.org. Don't forget to include your name, age, description of your entry, and permission from your guardian.



BIODIVERSITY WORD SEARCH

O A A N S M X J K K N F R M O Y F D K F
U F B T R F L A J E B W I V Q I S K M O
I A F Q Z E S T E B I R D S H T U H A D
F T D Z M G P D A Z O P P G H W Q I S P
B L H O J T M T A E D H A B I T A T A G
Y G O V S D V O I C I X X S T E C X D N
E D F W Y F Y N F L V P F S J E G E N G
E F O R E S T N V A E G R A S S U C N L
N H K O T R R Z Q L R S Y N B F H M U Z
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L A X Z T C Q X S Q I V A R A Z T T D F
A R U N V W X P F K T J R M Y T I Q U N
C P W G Q F R J B J Y L P S M I H C C M
T H O K R V C X Z P I M K K T A Y T F H
F Z I T O R Z M H N V N W P E Q L D O T
F H D C R E Y L S N N D J B E C Q S B D
N Q N Z Z T M E I V O D S M P U O H B G
D E F E Y R E X Y G A G K X B R G X D H
E J A K W R R I K O F D L V T T J M Q C
T M M Z T W E T L A N D S J L E J M E P

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HABITAT

BIRDS

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TREES

Trail Changes & Notices

JUNE – OCTOBER 2021, POST EDITION 30

FOR THE LATEST TRAIL CHANGE AND NOTICES, VISIT BRUCETRAIL.ORG/TRAIL_CHANGES

Trail Changes & Notices Online

Did you know? Our Trail changes online are up-to-date and searchable. You can search by Map Number, Club Section, Edition of Guide Affected, and even by text in the description. Visit brucetrail.org/trail_changes

Reservations Required

Be prepared to make parking reservations at some parks and conservation areas along the Bruce Trail. Parking reservations are currently required for:

- Hamilton Conservation Authority (conservationhamilton.ca): Spencer Gorge CA (Webster Falls, Tew Falls, Dundas Peak)
- Conservation Halton (conservationhalton.ca; parkvisit.ca): Mount Nemo, Rattlesnake Point, Crawford Lake, Hilton Falls CAs
- Credit Valley Conservation (cvc.ca): Cheltenham Badlands CA
- Ontario Parks (reservations.ontarioparks.com): Forks of the Credit, Mono Cliffs *NEW*
- Bruce Peninsula National Park (pc.gc.ca/bruce): Reservations required for parking at Halfway Dump (June 18 - Sept. 7, 2021), and at the Grotto / Cyprus Lake (May 1-Oct. 31, 2021).
- Lion's Head, McCurdy Drive (lionsheadparking.ca) *NEW*

NIAGARA

Map 1 – Alfred's Trot Side Trail

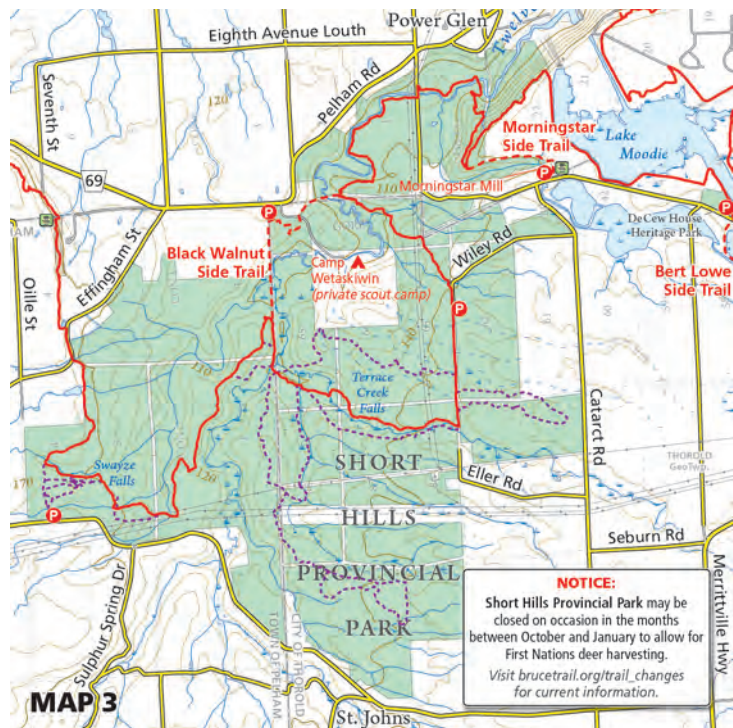
Starting just past the Landscape of Nations Commemorative Memorial and ending just before the Queenston Quarry, the new 1.5 km side trail, named after General Brock's horse, creates a 2.8 km loop with the main Bruce Trail.

New side trail = 1.5 km



Map 3 – Short Hills Provincial Park, Annual Closure

Short Hills Provincial Park will be closed on the following dates to honour treaty rights with a First Nation deer harvest: October 13-14, October 27-28, November 9-10, November 20-21, December 1-2, December 11-12. Each harvest day will begin one half-hour before sunrise and end one half-hour after sunset. The park will be closed the morning after each harvest for maintenance until noon. For more details visit www.ontarioparks.com/park/shorthills/alerts



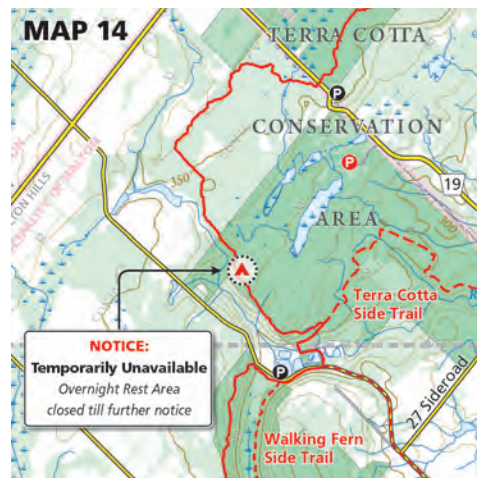
IROQUOIA

Map 8 – Dundas Valley ORA, Re-opened

The overnight rest area in Dundas Valley Conservation Area (DVCA) is no longer closed. This simple site by the DVCA Trail Centre is for use by BTC members only, for a maximum of one night, and must be reserved in advance through the DVCA Superintendent (dvalley@conservationhamilton.ca). No vehicles or fires permitted.

Map 14 – Terra Cotta ORA, Temporary Closure

The overnight rest area in Terra Cotta Conservation Area has been closed by Credit Valley Conservation until further notice.



TORONTO

Map 11 – Hilton Falls, Temporary Closure

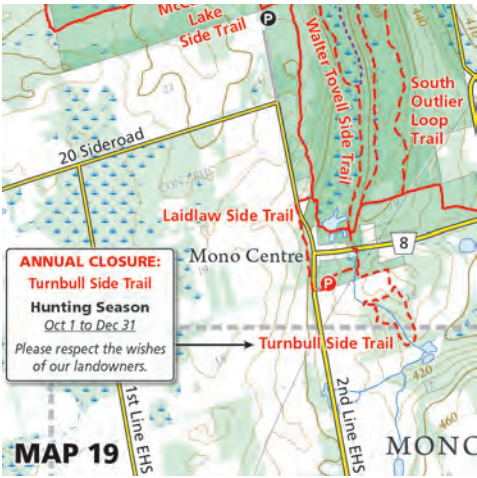
A section of the Hilton Falls Side Trail will be closed starting July 12, 2021, as a result of a Conservation Halton construction project. The closure and construction are expected to last until September 30, 2021.



CALEDON HILLS

Map 19 – Turnbull Side Trail, Annual Closure

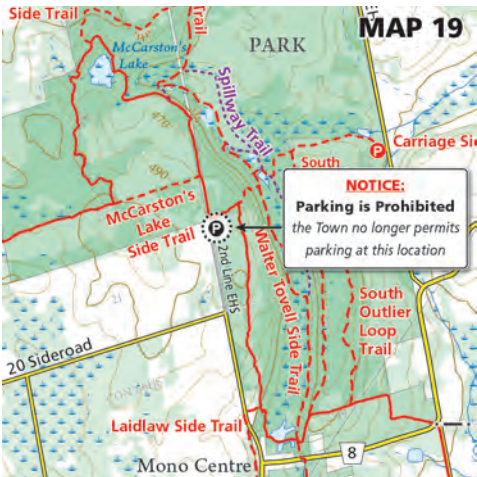
The landowner has requested an annual closure of the Turnbull Side Trail (Oct. 1 – Dec. 31) to accommodate hunting season on their land. Please obey the landowner's wishes.



DUFFERIN HI-LAND

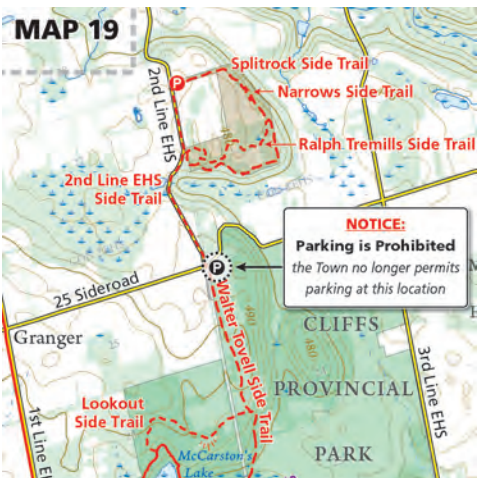
Map 19 – 2nd Line EHS, No Parking

The Town of Mono has prohibited roadside parking above along 2nd Line EHS near Mono Cliffs Provincial Park. This is no longer a recommended parking location.



Map 19 – 25 Sideroad, No Parking

The Town of Mono has prohibited roadside parking along 25 Sideroad near Mono Cliffs Provincial Park. This is no longer a recommended parking location.



Map 20 – Pine River, Reroutes and New Side Trail

Three new trail reroutes have been made possible through the recent creation of Pine River Nature Reserve. A section of the Kilgorie Side Trail was removed from the road and rerouted on the land immediately to the north. A section of main Trail was removed from the unimproved portion of 15th Sideroad. And a new Pine River Valley Side Trail creates a 3.1 km loop with the main Trail.

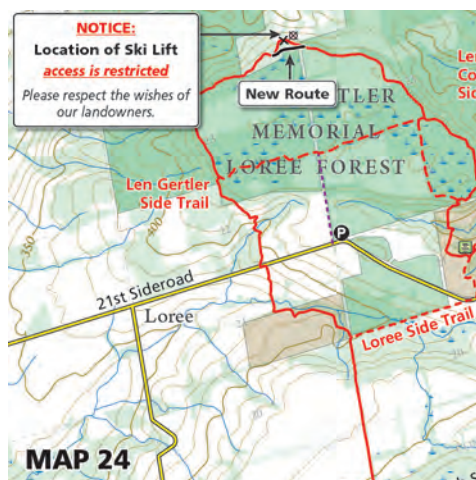
- Kilgorie Side Trail = 760 metres
- New Main Trail = 360 metres
- Pine River Valley Side Trail = 2.5 km



BEAVER VALLEY

Map 24 – Georgian Peaks, Reroute

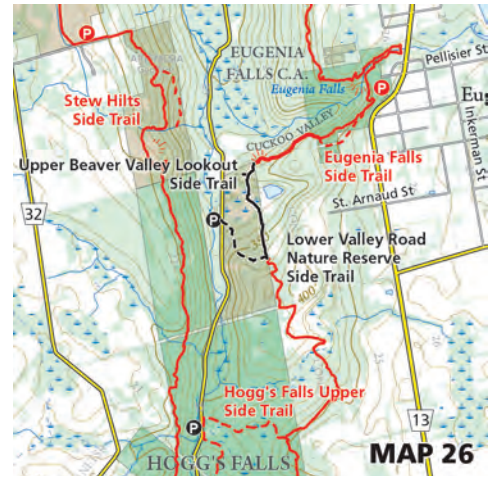
The Bruce Trail has been rerouted away from the ski lift on the Georgian Peaks Ski Club property at the landowner's request due to safety concerns.



Map 26 – Lower Valley, Reroute

A new trail configuration on the BTC's Lower Valley Nature Reserve takes 240 metres of trail off the road.

- Lower Valley Nature Reserve Side Trail = 480 metres
- Upper Beaver Valley Lookout Side Trail = 40 metres
- New Main Trail = 710 metres



Map 28 – Blantyre Springs Nature Reserve, New Parking and Reroute

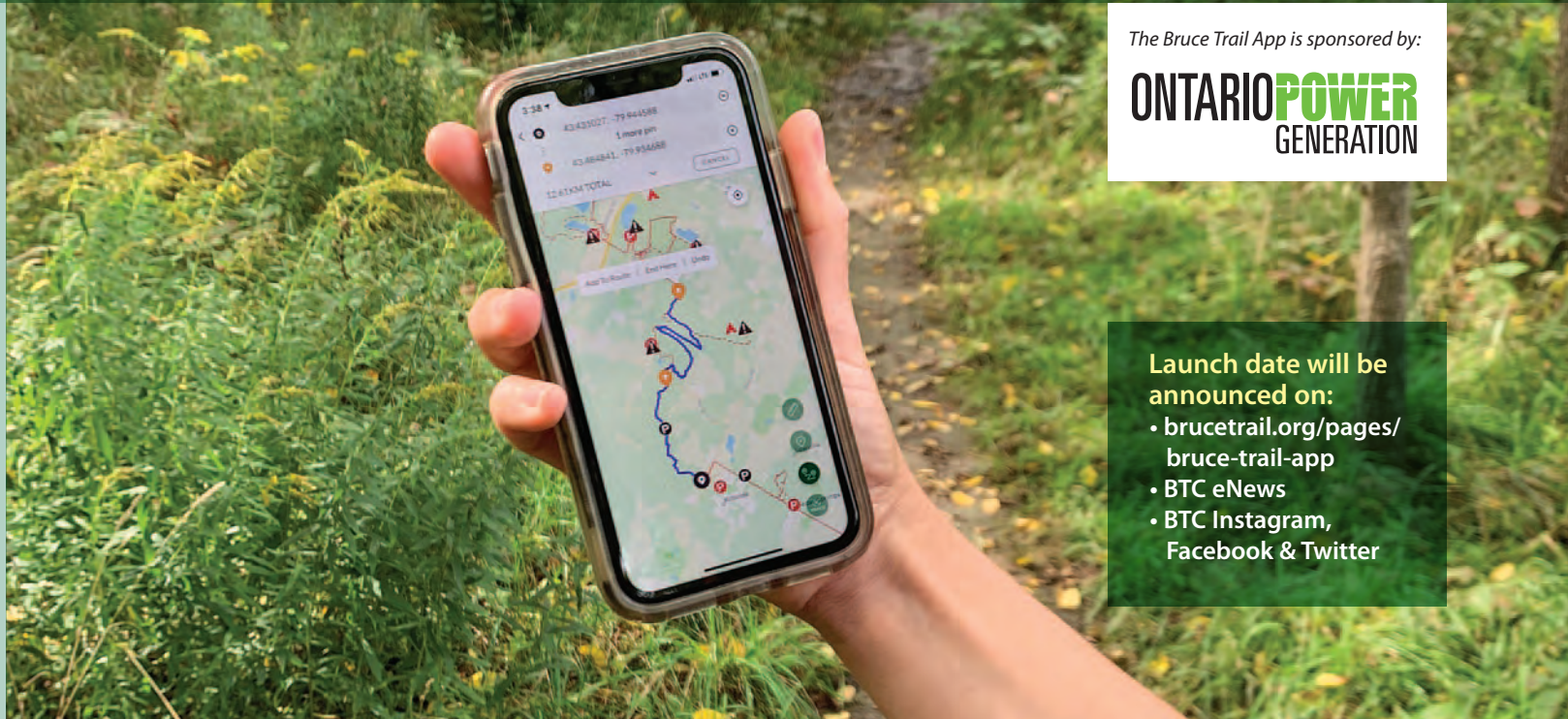
Following the acquisition Blantyre Springs Nature Reserve (see page 18), the Bruce Trail has been rerouted slightly to the north and through a new BTC parking area that will accommodate nine cars. The off-road parking that was located 60 metres to the south on private land has been abandoned.

New parking coordinates = N 44.500537°, W 80.632902°



The New Bruce Trail App is coming soon!

Find, Plan and Track your next Bruce Trail Adventure!



The Bruce Trail App is sponsored by:

ONTARIOPOWER
GENERATION

Launch date will be announced on:

- brucetrail.org/pages/bruce-trail-app
- BTC eNews
- BTC Instagram, Facebook & Twitter

Our new and improved Bruce Trail App will launch this fall on:



Plan and track your hikes along Canada's oldest and longest marked footpath, and explore new areas along the Niagara Escarpment, with the most up-to-date route information, in an easy-to-use format.

The Bruce Trail App can help beginner hikers, seasoned explorers, and aspiring End-to-Enders alike!

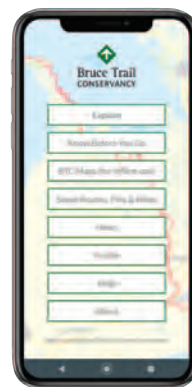
- Explore over 1,300 km of trails on the Niagara Escarpment.
- Find parking and camping information and get directions.
- Have the latest trail changes and notices on your phone.
- Customize your map view and see just the features you are interested in.
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- Track and record your hikes.
- Download BTC Maps for offline use.
- Explore BTC Protected Natural Areas.
- Find helpful "know before you go" tips
- Get the latest trail news and conservation updates.

The new Bruce Trail App is available for iOS and Android devices by subscription. Download the Bruce Trail App with a FREE 7-day trial. Then, to continue with unlimited access to the app and its ongoing trail updates, you can subscribe for \$2.99/month or \$29.99/year.

Proceeds from app subscriptions go to the Bruce Trail Conservancy to help maintain the app, care for the Trail, and support our conservation work.

Learn more at brucetrail.org/pages/bruce-trail-app

Thank you to all our supporters for your enthusiasm, and your patience, as we worked to incorporate member feedback, make necessary improvements, and build and test all the features of our new Bruce Trail App.



We'll continue to introduce new features and improvements based on your feedback in future releases.

If you purchased our original Bruce Trail App (in 2014-2020), thank you. Purchasers of the original app will not receive special pricing for the new app and are asked to pay the same subscription rate as everyone else. This new Bruce Trail App is a separate product, with significant improvements that we know you'll enjoy.



Trail Changes & Notices *continued*

SYDENHAM

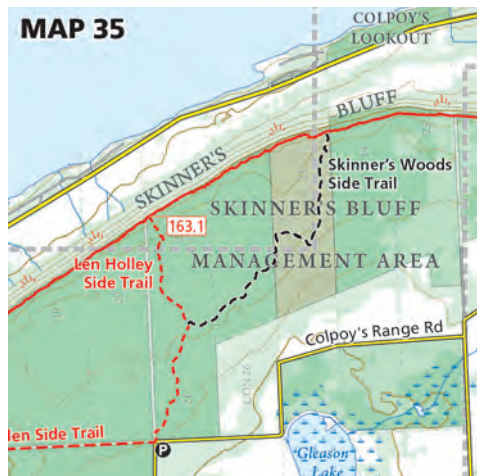
Map 29 – Walter’s Creek, Reroute

The main Trail has been routed in this area. A portion of the new treadway follows Walter’s Creek on what was once an old pioneer road connecting Walter’s Falls to Bognor.



Map 35 – New Skinner’s Woods Side Trail

A new side trail has been established on the BTC’s Skinner’s Woods Nature Reserve and on Skinner’s Bluff Management Area. This creates a 5.2 km loop with the Len Holley Side Trail and the main Bruce Trail. Skinner’s Woods Side Trail = 2.1 km



Map 39 – Cape Chin, Reroute and New Side Trail

An impressive and long-awaited new route has been laid out on the Escarpment brow of Maplecross Nature Reserve at Cape Chin coupled with a newly named side trail. Together, the new main Trail and the Cape Chin Meadows Side Trail create a loop of 8.9 km. Cape Chin Meadows Side Trail = 6.3 km New Main Trail = 2.6 km



Map 34 – New MapleCross Ridge Side Trail

A new side trail has been established on the BTC’s MapleCross Ridge Nature Reserve, offering an alternative route. The new side trail creates a 3.1 km loop with the main Bruce Trail and Coles Side Trail. MapleCross Ridge Side Trail = 430 metres



PENINSULA

Map 37 – New Shoreline Access Side Trail

A new side trail has been established in the Rush Cove area to offer access to the water and to create a 400-metre loop with the main Bruce Trail. Shoreline Access Side Trail = 200 metres



Map 39 – David Blasing Side Trail

The Peninsula Club has renamed the trail segment north of the Alan Fowler Side Trail as the David Blasing Side Trail in gratitude to the landowners for generously hosting this side trail on their beautiful property since the inception of the trail.



OUR GENEROUS DONORS

Thank you to all 2,126 donors who chose to support the Bruce Trail Conservancy with a gift between April 1 and June 30, 2021.

Special thanks to the following donors who made a gift of \$10,000 or more, or a gift of land, during this time:

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Caledon Hills BTC	Tracy Mann	Estate of Margaret Sebastian, In honour of Lorraine Sherred
Estate of Joan & Roger Cunnington	Catherine Martin & Family	Bruce Smith & Linda Amos
Wendy Findlay & Family	McCammom Family Foundation	Sydenham BTC
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Margaret Hill	Niagara BTC	J.C. Duff Limited
Chris Hoffmann & Joan Eakin	Ontario Land Trust Alliance Inc.	

Support Your Loved Ones and Make a Difference



Visit: willpower.ca/charities/bruce-trail-conservancy/
Contact: Gloria Vidovich, BTC Planned Giving & Donor Relations Officer,
gvidovich@brucetrail.org or 905-529-6821 ext. 248

Use the power of your Will to do more!

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The following donors gave \$250 or more between April 1 and June 30, 2021

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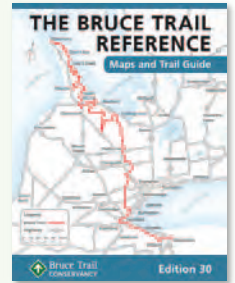


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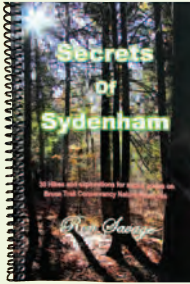
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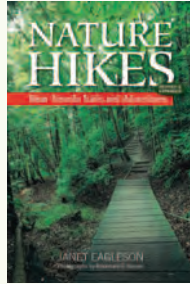
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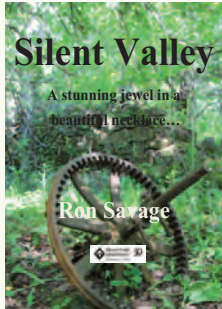
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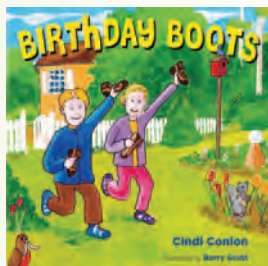


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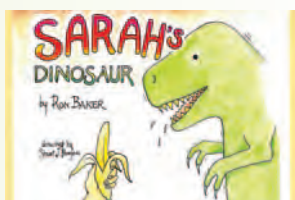


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The Bruce Trail App can help beginner hikers, seasoned explorers, and aspiring End-to-Enders alike!

Learn more inside on page 24 and at bruce-trail.org/pages/bruce-trail-app



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