

INSIDE: HIKING IN MUD SEASON

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# Bruce Trail

C O N S E R V A N C Y

MAGAZINE



Restoring Nature  
and Ourselves  
along the Bruce Trail

## Our Mission

Preserving a ribbon  
of wilderness, for  
everyone, forever.



Bruce Trail  
CONSERVANCY

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SPRING 2022



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Photo: Brian Popelier

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*Cover photo: Monarch on Common Milkweed, Fisher's Pond Nature Reserve, by Brian Popelier*

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# Chief Executive Officer's Message



The bright yellow petals of the Tall Sunflower were a sight to behold on my visit to Fisher's Pond Nature Reserve last October. Beyond their striking beauty, they were a good sign that the tallgrass prairie restoration we initiated in 2019 was starting to take hold.

I remember helping our ecologists to broadcast the grass and wildflower seeds on the fallow field at Fisher's Pond, full of hope and thrilled to be part of this initiative to restore an increasingly rare habitat. Now, here before me was an early sign of success; a tangible representation of the impact the Bruce Trail Conservancy is having on the health and diversity of Niagara Escarpment ecosystems.

Ecological restoration is just one of the tools in our conservation toolbox, but it is increasingly necessary here in southern Ontario and around the world. Our actions are part of a growing global movement, the UN Decade on Ecological Restoration 2021-2030, to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems worldwide. This international movement is a call to revive our life support system – the natural world – while we still can.

Nature surely does support us. Healthy ecosystems provide clean air, water and food. And a growing body of research is showing that spending time in nature can improve our physical and mental well-being. Perhaps, like me, you have become ever more grateful these past few years for the restorative effects of time spent on the Bruce Trail and in other natural environments.

As Robin Wall Kimmerer, professor of environmental and forest biology, eloquently expressed in her book *Braiding Sweetgrass*: "As we work to heal the earth, the earth heals us."

This issue of *Bruce Trail Conservancy Magazine* explores how we restore nature and how it restores us. As we grapple with the twin crises of climate change

and biodiversity loss, and face the physical, economic and emotional challenges of living through a pandemic, we need both of these types of 'restoration' more than ever.

In the pages ahead you'll read about some of the ecological restoration initiatives the Bruce Trail Conservancy has accomplished with the support of volunteers, members and donors. You'll hear from Bruce Trail Conservancy ecologists about the strategies we use to plan, implement and monitor restoration in our protected natural areas. And you'll learn about the remarkable ways in which exploring nature, on the Bruce Trail or beyond, can rejuvenate your mind, body and spirit.

As I returned home from Fisher's Pond that day, I felt my mind cleared,

and grounded and peaceful.

Experiencing the beauty of nature, we can't help but feel connected to the natural world. I hope you feel great joy in knowing that you support an organization that both protects and restores Niagara Escarpment ecosystems, while at the same time allows for people to connect with nature.

As spring arrives, I hope that you make some time to reconnect with nature, and explore the wonders of the Bruce Trail nestled deep inside our restorative conservation paradise. •

Michael McDonald,  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Tall Sunflower (*Helianthus giganteus*) at Fisher's Pond Nature Reserve

# BLAZES

News and Events from the Bruce Trail Clubs

**Our Blazes section is back! Bruce Trail Clubs are carefully planning for the safe return of in-person events, End-to-Ends and challenge hikes in 2022.**

*Please note: Events may be postponed, cancelled or revised in response to changes in COVID-19 guidelines or status. Check Club websites for details.*

## **DUFFERIN HI-LAND** [dufferinbrucetrailclub.org](http://dufferinbrucetrailclub.org)

### **Dufferin Hi-Land Two-Day End-to-End – May 14-15, 2022**

Join us for two days of hiking the hills of Dufferin County, enjoying the spring flowers and earning your Red Trillium Badge. The hike distance is approximately 28 km per day, with checkpoints providing refreshments and assistance along the way. Visit the BTC Hike Schedule ([hikes.brucetrail.org](http://hikes.brucetrail.org)) for details and registration.



### **Dufferin Hi-Land One-Day End-to-End – June 18, 2022**

Join us for a challenging day of hiking the hills of Dufferin County, enjoying the extra hours of daylight and earning your White Trillium Badge. The hike distance is 58 km with checkpoints providing refreshments and assistance along the way. This is an advanced/ expert event. Visit the BTC Hike Schedule ([hikes.brucetrail.org](http://hikes.brucetrail.org)) for details and registration.



## **BEAVER VALLEY** [beavervalleybrucetrail.org](http://beavervalleybrucetrail.org)

### **Falling Water Trail Loop – June 4, 2022**

New time of year! Come and test your mettle!

This 30.5 km hike traverses the beautiful,



**Content deadline for Blazes for the summer 2022 issue is April 15, 2022.**  
Send content to: Laura Tuohy, BTC Communications Coordinator, at [ltuohy@brucetrail.org](mailto:ltuohy@brucetrail.org)

rugged upper Beaver Valley. It's a challenging hike during which you'll experience all that spring has to offer, including cascading creeks and waterfalls. Registrants should have experience with hiking long distances over strenuous terrain.

Registration opens March 1, 2022 at 12 am through the BTC Online Hike Schedule ([hikes.brucetrail.org](http://hikes.brucetrail.org)). The \$25 fee covers the cost of the online registration fee, refreshments, and the badge. Details of the event will be emailed to participants once registration is received. For more information contact Glenda at [g60collings@gmail.com](mailto:g60collings@gmail.com).

### **Beaver Valley End-to-End – August 27-28, September 3-5, 2022**

Hike the 120 km Beaver Valley section and experience the beautiful varied terrain the valley has to offer. Now a yearly event! Please note that the event will be subject to COVID-19 protocols. Proof of vaccination will be required upon arrival

in order to board the bus and masks must be worn on the bus.

Registration opens March 1, 2022 at 12 am through the BTC Online Hike Schedule ([hikes.brucetrail.org](http://hikes.brucetrail.org)). Registration is limited to 50 people. When registration is full, names will be added to a waitlist by the online calendar software. The \$80 fee includes the online registration fee, bus shuttle transportation, refreshments and the End-to-End badge. No refunds after August 14, 2022.

Details of the event will be emailed to participants once registration is received. For more information contact Glenda at [g60collings@gmail.com](mailto:g60collings@gmail.com).



**VISIT CLUB WEBSITES FOR MORE NEWS, EVENTS AND HIKES.**



Photo: Shehryar Shaikh

# For Our Members



## Webinar Series



Photo: Patrick Hodge

### Invasive Species – March 10, 2022

Have you ever wondered what makes a species ‘invasive’? Curious about how the Bruce Trail Conservancy tackles this threat to Niagara Escarpment biodiversity? Join our resident ecologists to discuss the impact of invasive species on our local ecosystems, learn which species are considered the main offenders, and what strategies are being used to manage their spread.



Photo: Claire Estey

### Mushroom Identification and Photography – April 14, 2022

Explore the amazing world of woodland fungi and the important role they play in Escarpment ecosystems. Learn about what to look for in the wonderful diversity of mushrooms you may encounter on your next Bruce Trail hike.

Register online and watch past webinars at: [brucetrail.org/pages/news-events/webinars](http://brucetrail.org/pages/news-events/webinars)

## ROM Discount for BTC Members – Extended!

Bruce Trail Conservancy members will now have longer to use our unique 15% off admission promo code to the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) in Toronto.

ROM is extending its run of the popular *Wildlife Photographer of the Year* feature exhibition and our special partnership to **May 29, 2022**. You can enjoy the Wildlife Photographer of the Year, the new exhibition *Great Whales: Up Close and Personal*, or any of the regular exhibitions for this reduced price.

To save 15% off ROM admission, buy your tickets at [rom.on.ca](http://rom.on.ca) by **May 29, 2022** and enter the promo code: **WILDLIFEBTC21**.



Photo: James R.D. Scott

### ROM CONTESTS

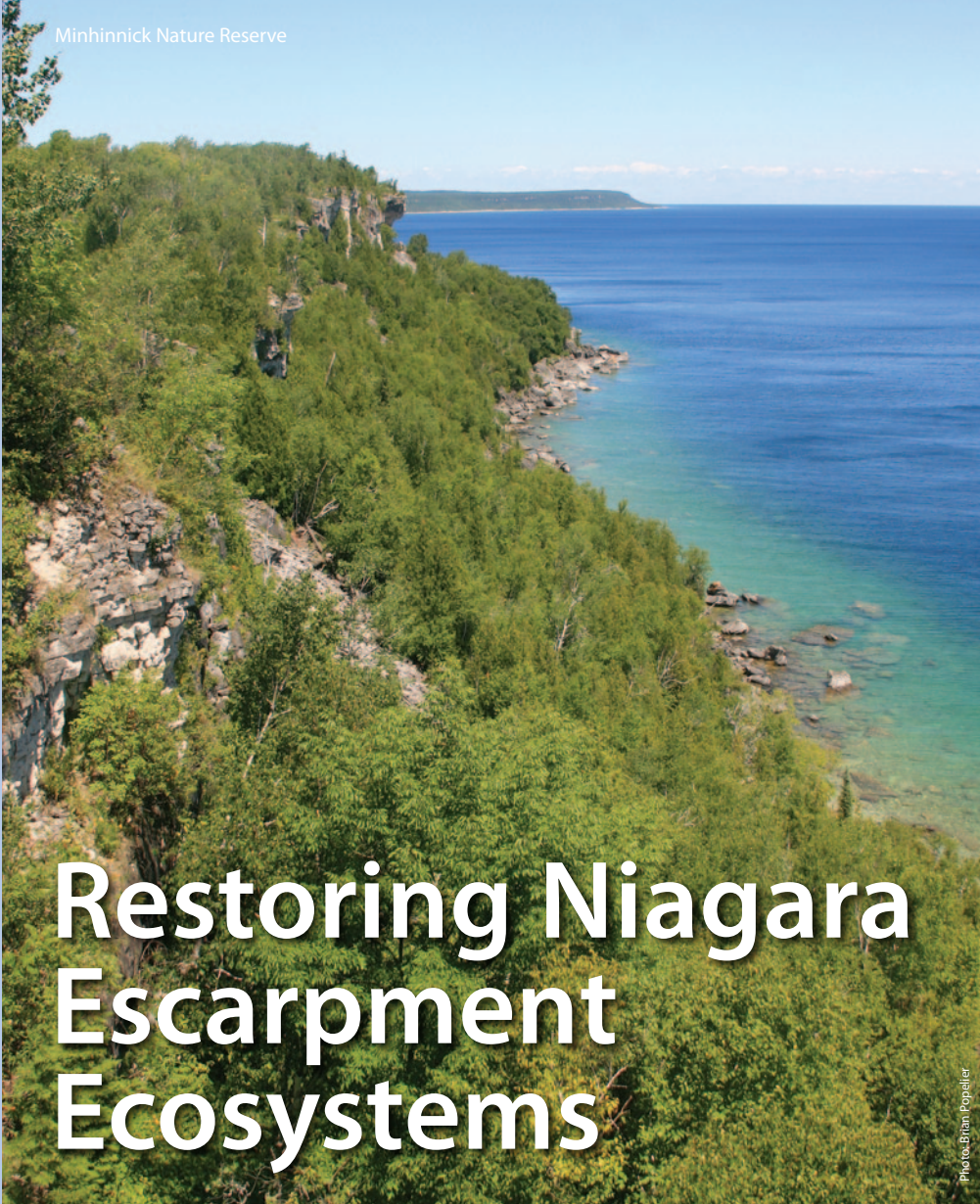
The Royal Ontario Museum also invites all BTC supporters participate two upcoming contests:

**ROM Wildlife Photographer of the Year Contest** (closes April 24, 2022): ROM invites you to share your captivating images of the natural world

for a chance to win a Nikon camera kit courtesy of Henry’s, and more! Share your wildlife image on Twitter or Instagram and include @ROMtoronto & #ROMwpyON (or #ROMwpyJR for ages 13-17). Find out more at [www.rom.on.ca/contest](http://www.rom.on.ca/contest)

### ROM Great Whales Contest

(closes May 1, 2022): Enter to win a trip for two to Newfoundland & Labrador to see whales, birds and ‘bergs. Learn more at [www.rom.on.ca](http://www.rom.on.ca) •



# Restoring Niagara Escarpment Ecosystems

Photo: Brian Popeller

As the Niagara Escarpment experiences the growing pressures of urbanization and climate change, the Bruce Trail Conservancy is helping ecosystems to recover – enhancing biodiversity and protecting the benefits that nature provides.

Ecosystems of the Niagara Escarpment support a brilliant diversity of life – including ourselves – yet these ecosystems face many challenges. Habitat fragmentation, invasive species, pollution, unsustainable use, and climate change are damaging them at an alarming rate. We are losing vulnerable species, key habitats, and the ecosystem services that sustain us.

### What is ecological restoration?

Ecological restoration is the process of assisting the recovery of a damaged ecosystem. Restorative activities can slow, halt or reverse ecosystem degradation.

Rather than simply returning an ecosystem to some desired historic state, restoration aims to put an ecosystem on a path towards improved health and integrity.

A healthy ecosystem is one in which all the natural parts (living and non-living) and processes (like predation, decomposition, etc.) are present, can persist, and can adapt to disturbance.

### Why do we restore?

Restoring ecosystems is important not only because they are home to countless plants and animals, but because of the services they provide, like clean air and

water, flood control, temperature regulation, and more. Restoring ecosystems is essential because we are damaging them at a faster rate than they can recover on their own.

By restoring ecosystems we can:

- prevent the loss of endangered species
- protect biodiversity
- mitigate the effects of climate change
- improve human health and well-being

Ecosystem restoration is one of the most important ways of delivering nature-based solutions to these key issues.

### What is the BTC doing?

The Bruce Trail Conservancy is conserving Niagara Escarpment ecosystems not only by acquiring and protecting natural areas but also by stewarding and restoring those areas. The combination of protection and restoration is key to addressing the urgent environmental challenges we face. Neither, in isolation, is enough.

### The BTC's restoration activities involve:

**Reducing Impacts:** Though tree planting is a popular restoration activity, some of the most common and important restorative activities aim to reduce impacts to ecosystems. Activities like removing invasive species, cleaning up trash, and preventing ATV traffic are key if plantings or other activities are to succeed.



**Building Habitat:** In previously damaged and disturbed areas, we actively recreate habitats where species can thrive. We build forest habitat by planting a variety of trees and shrubs. In old fields, we seed native prairie plants that will grow to become grassland habitat that supports pollinators, birds, and other wildlife.



**Supporting at-risk species:** In addition to creating the appropriate habitat, we occasionally take further steps to target restoration to a particular species of conservation concern. Examples include installing nest boxes and





reintroducing disease-tolerant elm trees into areas where they've been eradicated (see page 14).

### Restoring

**Connectivity:** By strategically restoring habitats the BTC can increase connectivity between isolated protected areas, allowing the movement of animals and the dispersal of plants across the landscape. This is especially important as species ranges shift due to climate change. We work at small and large scales, and with our neighboring landowners (private and public), to create corridors and connect habitats.



### Engaging

**Communities:** The BTC's restoration efforts involve Ontarians from Niagara Escarpment communities and beyond. They include over 250 land steward volunteers who care year-round for BTC protected areas, citizen science volunteers who contribute important biodiversity data, corporate groups who volunteer for projects, and landowners who steward their properties in collaboration with the BTC.



**Building Knowledge:** The BTC strives to ground our restoration efforts and

decisions in a knowledge of the land. Through research, regular site visits, and monitoring we are constantly learning. We are



committed to expanding our knowledge further by learning from Traditional Ecological Knowledge holders in the Indigenous communities along the Niagara Escarpment.

### What can you do?

There are simple changes we can all make in our lives and local communities to avoid further damage to our ecosystems and work towards ecological restoration.

- Support local restoration initiatives through volunteering or donation.
- Clean up trash along the trail and other natural areas.
- Brush off your boots after each hike to reduce the spread of invasive plant seeds.
- Plant native vegetation in your community and learn to identify invasive species.
- Use iNaturalist to document and learn about the plants and animals you see along the Bruce Trail and in your community.
- If you live along the Bruce Trail, consider participating in the BTC Landowner Stewardship Program •

## Bruce Trail Landowners: Let us help you restore your property

If you live along the Bruce Trail, the BTC Landowner Stewardship Program can assist you with enhancing the wildlife habitat on your property and contributing to the ecological health of the Niagara Escarpment.

Through the program, BTC staff will provide you with information, advice, and project assistance to help you steward the land you love in a way that contributes to healthier, more biodiverse and more resilient Niagara Escarpment ecosystems. All landowners with Bruce Trail on their land are eligible.

For more information on the program, or to arrange a site visit, contact Lyndsey Wilkerson, BTC Landowner Stewardship Coordinator at 1-800-665-4453 ext. 232 or [lwilkerson@brucetrail.org](mailto:lwilkerson@brucetrail.org)

## UN Decade on Ecological Restoration - A Global Call to Action



The United Nations has declared 2021-2030 the Decade on Ecological Restoration. The goal of this global movement is to “prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems on every continent and in every ocean.”

A decade may sound like a long time. But it is these next ten years that scientists say will count most in the fight to avert climate change and the loss of millions of species. We have to build a better relationship between humanity and the nature that sustains us before we reach a tipping point.

The UN Decade on Ecological Restoration aspires to

unite the world behind this common goal and draw together political support, scientific research and financial muscle to massively scale up restoration.

This decade is recognition that we all have a role to play in ecological restoration. Restoration must happen at multiple scales and in multiple locations in order to turn the tide and give people and nature a sustainable future.

The Bruce Trail Conservancy is contributing to this global mission. The importance of our conservation efforts will continue to grow during the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, and beyond.



## Ask an Ecologist: A Conversation About Restoration

With over 12,700 acres of land in the care of the Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC), how do we take practical measures to restore damaged or degraded ecosystems? For an inside look at how the BTC approaches restoration in our protected natural areas, we sat down with BTC ecologists, Brian Popelier and Mara McHaffie. Here's a summary of that conversation.

### What kinds of restoration activities does the BTC do in our protected areas?

**BP:** Our restoration efforts range. The range reflects the variety of habitats that we protect on the Niagara Escarpment and the level of intervention needed. Some of our common habitat restoration initiatives are invasive species control, tree planting for forest restoration, and grassland restoration in open areas like old fields.

**MM:** Some of our work targets specific species; for example, installing nest boxes for birds, and reintroducing disease-tolerant elm trees into areas where they've been eradicated. Other projects focus on reducing threats; for example, fencing areas that have been highly disturbed by ATVs and then doing erosion control and revegetation in those areas.

### How would you describe the BTC's approach to ecological restoration?

**BP:** Restoration projects are just one of the tools we use in the care of our properties. They are part of our overall stewardship planning process. For each of the properties that come into our care, we develop a unique stewardship plan. Once a property is acquired, we perform a three-season ecological study

of the new area. That involves identifying species, mapping ecosystems, and assessing the health of the ecosystems and any threats that may be impacting them. We use that information to create a plan for the property with recommended actions to help guide the work of staff and volunteers in maintaining or restoring ecological integrity.

**MM:** To expand on that, I would say that our general approach falls into three major steps: to assess and understand, to plan and implement, and to monitor and adapt.

It's important that our approach to the restoration of a site is grounded in our knowledge of the area itself, which is why we conduct the assessments that



Mara McHaffie at Fisher's Pond Nature Reserve

Photo: Brooke Henry

Brian mentioned. We want to really understand what's going on on the land before we plan any restorative actions.

Each property we manage has a stewardship plan that details this information about the ecosystems, any threats, and recommended actions. The next step is to implement that plan, which may include working with volunteers and partners to reduce threats (for example, invasive species) and restore the native biodiversity and functions of the ecosystem (for example, by seeding native grassland species).

Finally, it's really important that we monitor the success of our projects so that if things are not going according to plan, which sometimes happens, we can adapt and take further actions to improve success. For example, if the survival rate is low for a tree planting due to deer browsing, then we may have to replant the following year and invest more in fencing.

### How do we determine if restoration is needed at a BTC protected natural area?

**MM:** Deciding whether restoration is needed really comes down to assessing the current condition of the ecosystems and the threats to their health. Ecological restoration is all about getting ecosystems back on a healthy trajectory so that they can continue to develop, recover and sustain themselves. So, we assess whether we think an ecosystem is on that trajectory. If some damage to an ecosystem is present but the ecosystem appears to have the capability to recover on its own, we may choose not to intervene.

**BP:** For example, we may have an area that was deforested but there is a forest nearby that is acting as a source of seeds and new plants, and we're already seeing native tree seedlings popping up. In this case, we might choose to just ensure that no further deforestation takes place and allow recovery. But in another deforested area where there is no nearby seed source and poor establishment of new seedlings, we may undertake forest restoration.

### Why don't we just let nature take its course?

**BP:** In some cases we do just that. Once we acquire a property, we take steps to protect the land from damage and unauthorized activities. Sometimes simply protecting the area from any

misuse and monitoring its condition is enough, and the area is left to function in its natural state.

**MM:** Also, we may choose not to undertake restoration if a damaged ecosystem is already on a trajectory toward recovery. In some cases, nature may actually do a better job than us; for example in sites where there is no topsoil, nature is very good at creating new soil over time and that may be a better solution than transporting loads of soil to a site, which is carbon-intensive and risks the introduction of invasive seeds.

**BP:** However, some areas have experienced massive disturbance or degradation as a direct or indirect result of human activities and need a more active restoration approach. These areas tend to have low biodiversity and impaired ecological processes and when left on their own will take a long time to return to a highly functional ecosystem if at all.

**MM:** Yes, where restoration is important is in situations where ecosystems are unlikely to recover without intervention. Here in southern Ontario, most ecosystems have been hugely impacted by fragmentation and degradation and this can make it difficult for them to recover naturally.

Through restorative activities, we can also help ecosystems adapt to the rapid environmental change that we're experiencing, whether that's by creating habitat corridors that help species migrate in response to climate change or introducing genetic diversity into plant populations to increase their adaptive capacity.

### Once we've determined restoration is necessary, how do we decide what kind of actions to take?

**MM:** It's important that we choose to restore the site to an ecosystem that matches the environmental conditions of the site, provides appropriate habitat for the species in the area, and is consistent with the history and the landscape. For example, if we are looking at an old farm field that is quite dry and is providing habitat for at-risk grassland birds in an area that historically supported tallgrass prairie, we would likely choose to restore it to a grassland rather than a forest because a grassland ecosystem better matches the present



Brian Popelier guiding an interpretive hike.

Photo: David M. Cascoigne

conditions and history of the site.

The actual activities that we carry out will then depend on what aspects of that ecosystem are already present, what needs to be restored and what threats need to be mitigated.

**BP:** We also look for opportunities to take actions that will enhance ecological services such as water quality, wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration and the quality of the trail experience to connect people with nature.

### What are some of the common misconceptions people have about ecological restoration?

**MM:** One misconception I've encountered is the idea that ecosystems are static and restoration is about reconstructing what they looked like at a specific point in history. Ecosystems are dynamic and always have been, so we should expect them to change through time.

While we use historical information to guide our restoration efforts, part of restoration is ensuring that restored ecosystems can carry out dynamic processes and adapt in response to changes. The global environmental change we're experiencing means that ecosystems are going to look different than they did a few hundred years ago.

**BP:** Yes, you can never restore an area to an 'original' ecological state. Nature is always changing and evolving. But you can help to maintain and bring back biological diversity, improve resilience in an era of climate change, and attempt to re-establish our connection to the natural world by not disassembling it but rather helping to put it back together.

**MM:** A related misconception is that restoration is a short-term activity that you do and then you can walk away. In reality, restoration means developing a long-term relationship with the land; this is something that I've heard many Indigenous conservationists and restorationists emphasize.

**BP:** Right, we can't walk away after the major planting or clean-up event is done. Restoration projects take years of maintenance to be successful. From replacing plantings that did not survive, to invasive species control, to controlled burns in prairie restoration sites, sites need continued work and monitoring.

**MM:** Another common misconception that is perhaps not specific to restoration is that healthy ecosystems are ones that are 'untouched' by humans. The idea that humans are not part of nature and that all human activity is detrimental to nature is fundamentally false. We now understand and acknowledge that Indigenous people have been shaping this landscape for millennia and fostering mutually beneficial relationships with species and ecosystems. By respecting and learning from Traditional Ecological Knowledge, we can work on repairing our relationships with other species.

### How have approaches to restoration changed over the years?

**MM:** As restoration ecology becomes more of an established science I think we're seeing a shift from more of a trial and error approach to an emphasis on establishing and following best practices and monitoring the results so that what is learned can be applied to other projects. I think this is a natural shift as the field grows and matures.

**BP:** We're also changing some of our approaches in light of climate change. For example, we know that southern species are beginning to migrate or shift their ranges north in response to climate change. So, when it comes to plantings, we need to adjust our species selection accordingly. We're looking at sourcing seed and plants from areas south of our region where the climate is warmer. And when we have a planting project in our northern areas, we may incorporate species typical of the southern sections. For example, Shagbark Hickory doesn't

grow much further north than Toronto but we may include it as a species in a project in the Sydenham section in anticipation of warmer temperatures in the future.

**MM:** Yes, and climate change is affecting how we source an individual species of plant. It used to be that sourcing seed as locally as possible was always considered the best practice, because local seed would be best adapted to local conditions. But since we want our restored ecosystems to be resilient to climate change, we obtain seeds from a greater variety of sources to increase the adaptive capability of the population.

We're also seeing more emphasis being placed on Traditional Ecological Knowledge and local knowledge now, which is certainly a move in the right direction and something we're trying to incorporate here at the BTC. Along with that, many restoration projects are now incorporating objectives related to social and cultural well-being, acknowledging that we can restore ecological and social health together, because they are interconnected.

### What role do volunteers play in our restoration work?

**BP:** Our volunteers are crucial to our ability to implement successful restoration projects. Volunteers provide a great deal of labour in the initial stages, especially when lots of hands-on work is needed. And they are integral to the follow-up maintenance and long-term care of the projects.

**MM:** Volunteers help with invasive species removal, tree planting, submitting species observations through our citizen science project, and so much more. Volunteer Land Stewards regularly check on the properties we manage so they're really important in keeping an eye on projects after they've been implemented and flagging any new threats that we might need to deal with.

**BP:** Many of our volunteers approach staff with ideas on projects they would like to implement. They take on the organization and management of the restoration sites with an exuberance I have not experienced anywhere else. The passion that our volunteers have for the BTC's conservation mission is impressive and we could not do the



Photo: Toronto Bruce Trail Club

restoration work we do without their help.

### What excites you most about the BTC's restoration work?

**BP:** What excites me is returning to an area a few years after a restoration project has begun and witnessing the results of our work. It can be amazing to see how the native plants we seeded or planted have flourished and created a ripple effect of increased biodiversity. Native insects return in large numbers to the flora they evolved with; with them come the birds and the mammals and so forth. The once sparse space is now thriving with life.

Looking ahead, I am excited about the opportunities to partner with First Nations in restoration work and incorporate Indigenous expertise and knowledge of the natural world into more of what we do.

**MM:** I find it really exciting to work in such a dynamic and future-focused field. Restoration ecology is still a relatively young science, so we are learning new things all the time about best practices and the impacts of restoration. This means we can keep improving and adapting. At the same time, through monitoring our restoration projects, we, along with our partners, can actually contribute to this growing body of knowledge. I'm excited to see what more we'll know and the impact of our restoration work a few decades into the future. •

# Grassland Restoration at Fisher's Pond

The Bruce Trail Conservancy's largest restoration project to date is well on its way and early monitoring results suggest that tallgrass prairie species are establishing themselves at Fisher's Pond Nature Reserve.

One of the most endangered ecosystems in Canada, tallgrass prairies once covered a significant part of southern Ontario's landscape. Now less than 3 per cent of their original extent remains in the region, mainly due to urban development, agriculture, and pollution. As these highly diverse habitats are rare and threatened, so too are many of the wildlife species which depend on them for their survival.

In 2019, the Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC) launched efforts to restore tallgrass prairie at Fisher's Pond Nature Reserve in Burlington. Ten acres of open field were seeded with a mix of native prairie grasses and wildflowers.

To gauge the progress of the restoration, regular monitoring is underway. Twenty long-term monitoring plots have been set in the field. BTC ecologists visit them annually to record the

plant species found inside the 1 m by 1 m plots, and the relative area each species occupies. Repeat photographs are also taken in consistent locations over time to monitor vegetation and ecosystem change. To complement the vegetation monitoring, breeding bird surveys help to determine if grassland birds are returning to the site.

The monitoring results and the lessons learned in this project at Fisher's Pond Nature Reserve will inform future restoration work on other BTC protected natural areas. •



Monitoring plot

“An old farm field left alone will likely never recover to a tallgrass prairie. There are no seed sources nearby due to the rarity of the ecosystem, and there are no longer the forces in play that used to maintain these prairies, like fire. If we want to see more tallgrass prairies return to the landscape, we need to actively restore them.”

– Mara McHaffie, BTC Ecologist

## Target Species Recorded at Fisher's Pond Nature Reserve

We're keeping eyes and ears out for certain 'target' species that rely on or are representative of tallgrass prairie ecosystems, especially species at risk. Their presence is a good indicator of restoration success.

Here are some target species we've recorded at Fisher's Pond since restoration efforts began.



Canada Wildrye

**5 grasses, including**

- Canada Wildrye
- Big Bluestem
- Old Switch Panicgrass



Eastern Meadowlark

**2 birds**

- Savannah Sparrow
- Eastern Meadowlark



Smooth Aster

**11 wildflowers, including**

- Smooth Aster
- Tall Sunflower
- Canada Tick Trefoil

# Getting a GRIPP on Species Restoration

**The Bruce Trail Conservancy is teaming up with the Gosling Research Institute for Plant Preservation (GRIPP) to help re-establish the American Elm in southern Ontario forests.**

Newly-planted elm saplings, scarcely one metre tall, sway in the breeze on the Bruce Trail Conservancy's Splitrock Narrows Nature Reserve. These trees and nearly 900 like them are part of a bold, innovative effort to help the American Elm (*Ulmus americana*) recover from the population-destroying effects of Dutch Elm Disease (DED).

These special elms were grown in a lab using *in vitro* technology at the Gosling Research Institute for Plant Preservation (GRIPP) at the University of Guelph. There, material from mature American Elms that show tolerance to DED is propagated to create thousands of disease-tolerant plantlets.

The stately American Elm has suffered devastating losses since the introduction of DED to North America in the 1930s. Since then, this species has gone from being a significant component of our mature forest canopy, to a short-lived tree that cannot compete with this fungal infection. While few in number, some individual American Elms have tolerance against DED and are still found growing in rural and urban landscapes. However, they are often too isolated to breed with each other. And traditional propagation methods for surviving elms take too long to produce enough trees for re-planting initiatives.

Researchers at GRIPP, led by Dr. Praveen Saxena and Dr. Mukund Shukla, have developed a different approach. Under lab conditions, using a technique known as plant tissue culture, they have been able to speed up the propagation process. Using material from a seemingly DED-tolerant mature American Elm on the U of G campus, GRIPP grew 1000 clones which theoretically contain the same tolerance to DED. After years of research and refining methodologies, saplings were ready to plant in 2021.



The work of GRIPP is made possible by Bruce Trail Conservancy Co-founder and Honorary President, Dr. Philip R. Gosling and his wife Susan Gosling, a plant scientist, who have both made conservation a personal priority.

Dr. Gosling asked the Bruce Trail Conservancy to take the lead on distributing the GRIPP-grown elms for planting throughout southern Ontario in an effort to introduce more robust and disease-tolerant elms, and their genetics, into the wild. The hope is that GRIPP-grown elms may acquire enhanced tolerance to DED and to drastic climate changes resulting in new generations of climate-adapted elms in Ontario.

The Bruce Trail Conservancy reached out to seven other agencies to distribute and plant 900 of these special trees in the fall of 2021. Partners in this effort were: City of Toronto, Niagara Parks Commission, Royal Botanical Gardens, Conservation Hamilton, City of Hamilton, McMaster University and Conservation Halton.

Ninety of these elms have been planted on BTC properties and will be closely monitored over the coming years by BTC staff and volunteers. GRIPP is continuing to propagate American Elms, along with several other threatened plant species, so this important project and partnership will grow for years to come. •

**Learn more about GRIPP at [gripp.ca](http://gripp.ca)**



## Bruce Trail Reset

By Thomas Kuster



Photo: Thomas Kuster

*To me, hiking the Bruce Trail is a reset of the senses.*

The tactile change from the rough bark of a tree trunk to the light touch of a blade of grass brings your fingertips back to life.

The visual assault of the reds, yellows and oranges of an autumn day that thankfully feels nothing like the bright hum of a computer screen that has you rubbing your eyes by day's end.

The odours of the forest; the flowers, the running water, but mostly the clean, potent air as it fills your lungs with energy.

The revitalizing taste of that air; like nothing you would experience at home or work as you pass through drive-thru for an artificial pick-me-up.

The sounds! The wind through the leaf-covered branches, the birds calling out to each other, the sounds of nothingness. A tremendous respite from the incessant drone of the city.

To me, hiking on the Bruce Trail is all of that, and so much more. I cannot wait for my next sensory trip. •

### 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 Conservancy 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](mailto:communications@brucetrail.org)

# Restoring Ourselves in Nature

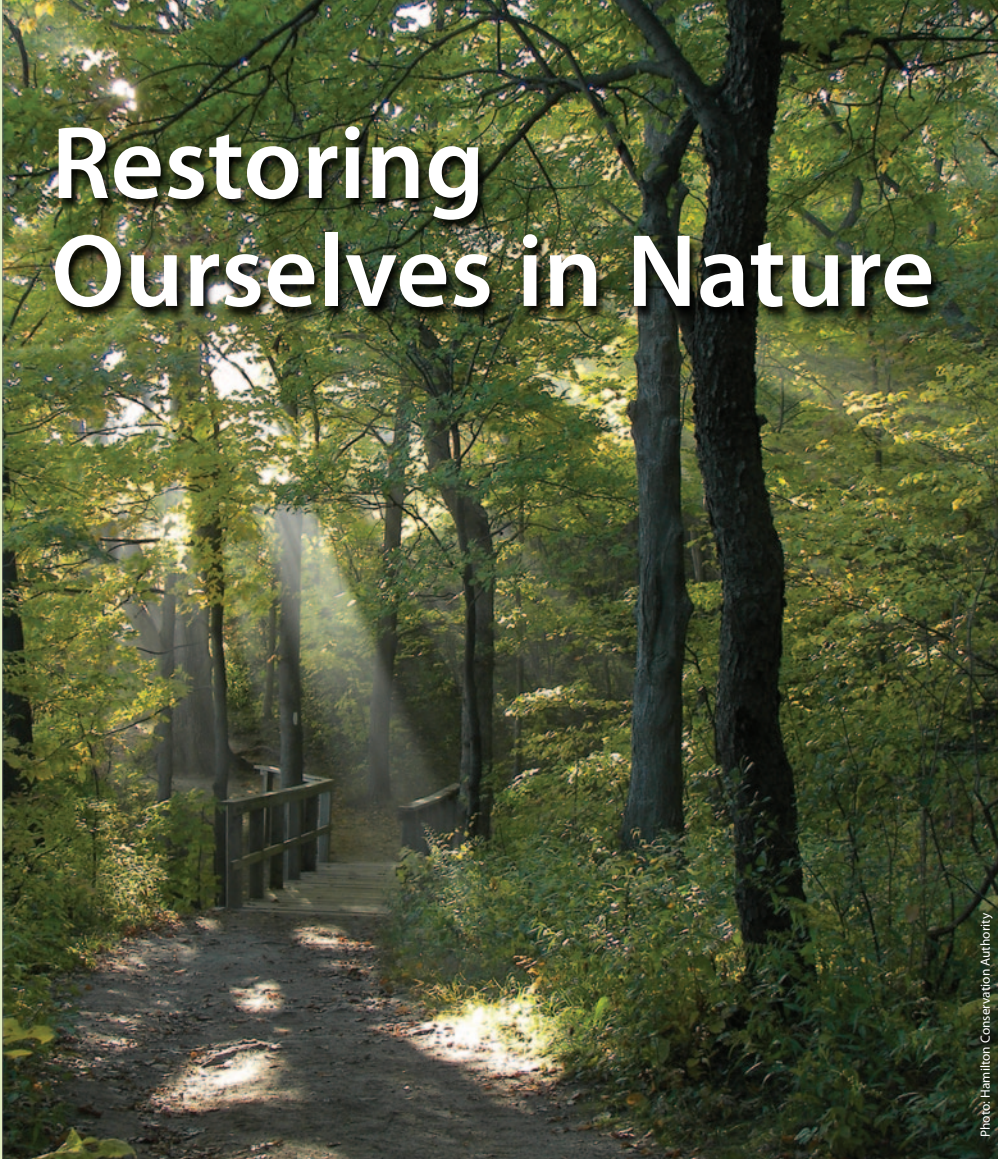


Photo: Hamilton Conservation Authority

Spending time in nature can make us feel more relaxed, boost our mood, and even combat heart disease. Now more than ever, we are realizing that nature is not only good for our health and well-being, it's essential.

Over the past two years, a growing number of people have turned to nature for solace, restoration and healing in challenging times. During the pandemic, we have been (re)discovering the benefits of a walk in the park.

An intuitive and ancient idea, the power of nature to improve our physical and mental health is being reiterated through growing scientific evidence. This evidence comes from many different fields of study including psychology, ecology, public health and disease management. The past few years have seen an explosion of research revealing concrete links between increased exposure to nature and a wide variety of health benefits.

## Time spent in nature has been strongly linked to improved:

- energy levels
- mood and self-esteem
- sleep
- memory retention and concentration
- cardiovascular health
- immune system response
- recovery from surgery, illness or trauma

## And decreased:

- stress and anxiety
- symptoms of depression
- blood pressure
- mental fatigue
- risk of illness

The mechanisms behind these and other benefits are still being studied, but the takeaway is clear. Spending time in nature isn't just a nice diversion, it's essential to our health. Natural areas and our connection to them are key components of healthy communities.

## Losing our Connection to Nature

We are living in an increasingly urban world where the connection between humans and nature is becoming more distant, physically and psychologically. In Canada, 81.5 per cent of the population lives in cities. As cities expand, natural areas are often reduced or removed to make way for development. This disconnection is furthered by our indoor lifestyles. Canadians are spending 90 per cent of each day indoors, and another 5 per cent in vehicles (Canadian Human Activity Pattern Survey 2, 2014). This inside life is contributing to chronic health issues.

While the pandemic has highlighted the health benefits of time in nature, it has also exposed that, in an increasingly urbanized world, our access to nature is dwindling. And often the most socio-economically disadvantaged people face the biggest barriers to accessing nature.

Given the amazing array of health benefits nature offers, and our increasing isolation from it, we need to renew this vital connection. We need to protect and expand natural areas and ensure they are safe, accessible, and inclusive places to connect with nature.

## The Bruce Trail: a pathway to better health

During COVID-19 the Bruce Trail has been a lifeline for many people to restore their mental health and well-being. It has connected people to nature and to each other at a time when we have needed it most.

Throughout the Bruce Trail's history, people have used the Trail to challenge themselves, to unwind, to visit scenic destinations, and more. From life-changing End-to-End journeys to invigorating lunchtime walks, many have discovered the positive side effects to their physical and mental health.

The Bruce Trail Conservancy has been working for decades protecting and stewarding natural areas and facilitating ecologically responsible public access to greenspace along the Niagara





Escarpment. Through a world-class trail system, a network of nature reserves, and programs like our guided hikes, we are fostering ongoing and growing connections to nature. We will work to promote access and inclusion in Bruce Trail places and spaces so that more hikers, experienced and new, can enjoy nature's benefits.

Whether you embark on an End-to-End trip or spend an afternoon by an Escarpment pond, the Bruce Trail can foster a closer connection to nature and be a pathway to better health.

### 5 Ways to Make the Most of Nature's Health Benefits

#### Make time for nature

Making regular time for nature, even in small doses, can improve our well-being. Registering for a Bruce Trail Club hike is a helpful way to add nature to your schedule. But even a short walk or break in nature, close to home, can provide health benefits. Studies show that spending at least 2 hours in nature each week can result in significantly better health and well-being. By setting goals to spend time in nature and by integrating it into our weekly routine, we can ensure we don't neglect this important connection.

#### Engage your senses

To maximize the health benefits of being in nature, try your best to be present. Bring your phone for safety, but keep it tucked away to really recharge your mental batteries. Take time to enjoy the countless shades of green, listen for birds or trickling streams, and breathe in the smell of the earth. This can allow your brain to focus on the here and now and let go of the distractions or troubles of the day, reducing stress.

#### Take a friend

Inviting a friend or family member along while you spend time in nature can be a rewarding experience and increase the bonds between loved ones. Taking in the sights and sounds of nature is a fulfilling and engaging activity to enjoy with others. Studies show that socializing with others can also sharpen memory and cognitive abilities and stave off depression, adding to the list of benefits.

#### Be creative

Connecting with nature isn't limited to walking in the woods. Journaling, drawing, and photography are just a few of the activities that can help connect us to the natural world. These activities allow you to be outside while also taking time to be mindful of the world around you. Spending time outside can also help increase creativity when you encounter writer's block or need inspiration.

#### Volunteer outdoors

Health benefits start to grow when you volunteer outdoors. Not only do you get the benefits of time spent in nature, volunteering itself can improve your health. Connecting with others, learning new skills, and contributing to important

#### Resources

Curious to learn more about the restorative benefits of nature? Here is a small sample of the many resources you may be interested in:

- *The Nature Fix: Why Nature Makes Us Happier, Healthier, and More Creative*, Florence Williams, 2017.
- *The Nature Principle: Human Restoration and the End of Nature-Deficit Disorder*, Richard Louv, 2011.
- *Your Brain on Nature*, Eva M. Selhub MD and Alan C. Logan ND, 2012.
- Healthy Parks, Healthy People ([www.ontarioparks.com/hphp/engage](http://www.ontarioparks.com/hphp/engage))
- ParX: A Prescription for Nature ([www.parkprescriptions.ca](http://www.parkprescriptions.ca))
- Nature @ McMaster ([nature.mcmaster.ca/research-education/nature-health-new-version/](http://nature.mcmaster.ca/research-education/nature-health-new-version/))

causes can help you stay mentally and physically healthy. Make the most of both worlds, and give back to nature, by volunteering for conservation. Find out more about volunteer opportunities with the Bruce Trail Conservancy at [brucetrail.org/pages/get-involved/volunteering](http://brucetrail.org/pages/get-involved/volunteering) •



# Conservation in Action: New Protected Areas

Four new natural areas are now in the care of the Bruce Trail Conservancy thanks to our growing community of generous donors committed to protecting and restoring the Niagara Escarpment for future generations.

## **Rushing River Nature Reserve - Caledon Hills section**

*Hockley Valley, Map 18*

*7 acres | 303 m of Bruce Trail Optimum Route*

Located just south of the Hockley Valley Provincial Nature Reserve, this new nature reserve gets its name from the idyllic Nottawasaga River that bisects the northern part of the property. Featuring mature maple, beech and ash trees, the property provides habitat for species who thrive in hardwood forests like Scarlet Tanager, Woodthrush, White-tailed deer, and Porcupine.

Though there is currently no Bruce Trail on the property, Rushing River Nature Reserve is an important step towards creating a conservation corridor in this area. Eventually, it will also play a role in getting more than one kilometre of the Bruce Trail off the road, allowing people to safely connect with the Niagara Escarpment in a more natural environment.



Rushing River Nature Reserve

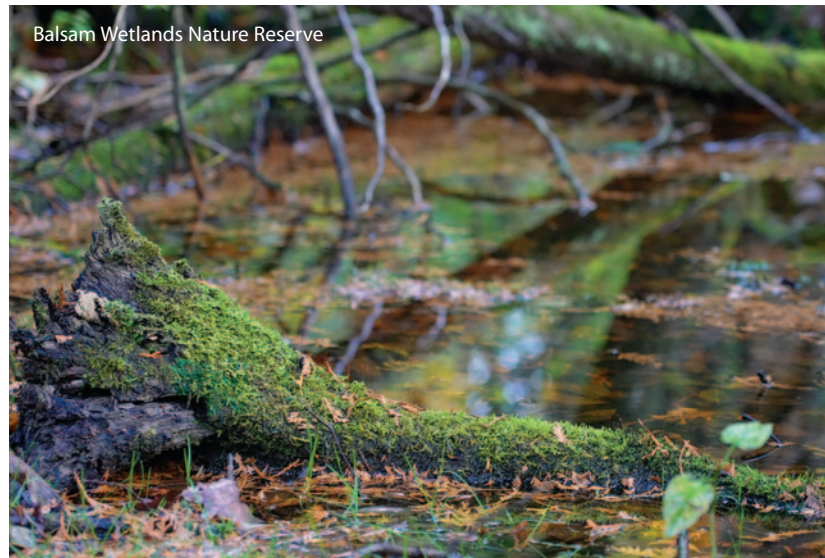
## **Balsam Wetlands Nature Reserve - Blue Mountains section**

*Devil's Glen, Map 22*

*284 acres | 4 km of Bruce Trail Optimum Route*

Balsam Wetlands Nature Reserve, south of Collingwood, features an expansive Balsam Fir and White Cedar swamp. This wetland provides vital habitats for water-loving plants and wildlife like Northern Waterthrush, minks, and a variety of amphibians. Balsam Wetlands Nature Reserve is also home

to Species at Risk including Black Ash trees and Hart's-tongue Fern. The Bruce Trail is not yet on the property but once it is, hikers will have a lovely 4 km stretch to explore, and the Trail will be kept off the busy nearby road.



Balsam Wetlands Nature Reserve

## **Eugenia Woods Nature Reserve - Beaver Valley section**

*Eugenia, Map 26*

*20 acres | 650 m of Bruce Trail Optimum Route*

Adjacent to Eugenia Falls Conservation Area, Eugenia Woods Nature Reserve completes an 18 km stretch of protected natural landscape along the slopes of the picturesque Beaver Valley. Large corridors like this are important for species that require expansive natural areas in which to thrive. The mature hardwood forests on the property are not only valuable habitats for woodland species but also purify our air, filter our water, and prevent erosion all while providing a stunning hiking experience. Many thanks to those who gave generously to our year-end fundraising campaign in support of the creation of Eugenia Woods and Balsam Wetlands Nature Reserves.



Eugenia Woods Nature Reserve



### Lindenwood Pond Nature Reserve - Sydenham section

*The Glen, Map 33*

99 acres | 547 m of Bruce Trail Optimum Route

The newly protected Lindenwood Pond Nature Reserve is home to a large Sugar Maple forest with patches of Eastern White Cedar. Hidden in the forest is a serene naturalized pond with a trickling watercourse that provides a home to amphibians and water-loving birds. Lindenwood Pond Nature Reserve sits between The Glen Management Area to the south and east and the BTC Lindenwood property to the north, and completes a 14 km natural corridor of protected land.

Together with these adjacent conservation lands, large swaths of interior forest are conserved. This ‘deep woods’ habitat is crucial for certain animal species to thrive in an otherwise fragmented forest landscape. •

## Explore BTC Protected Areas in the Bruce Trail App

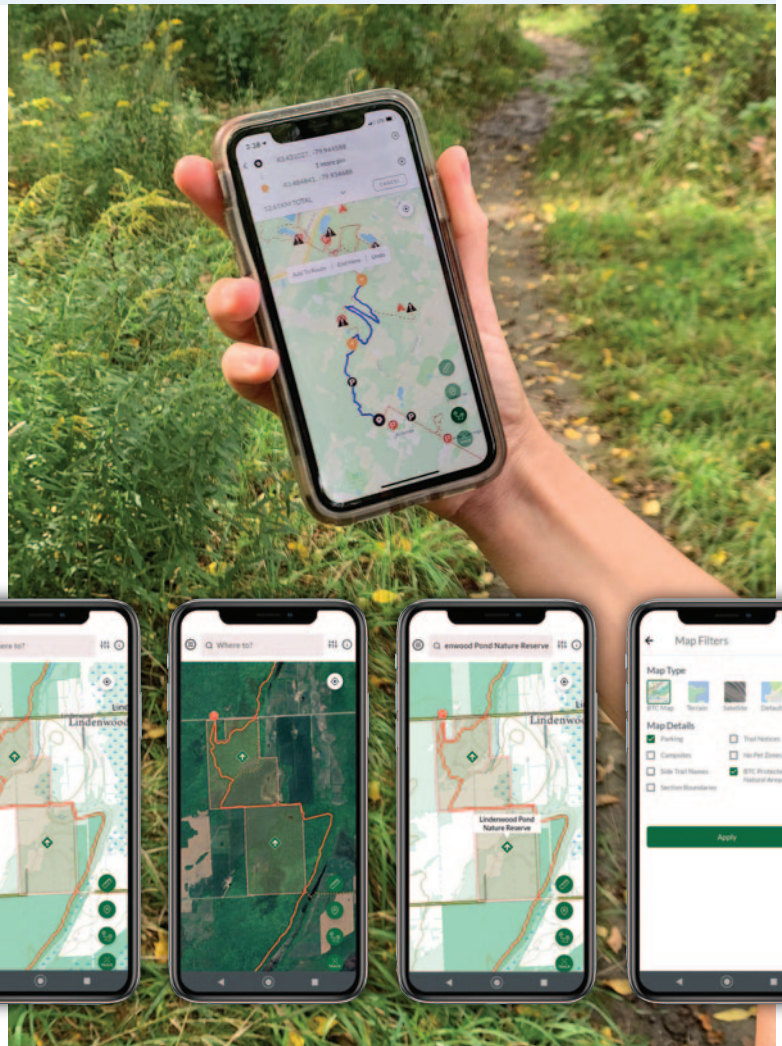
The Bruce Trail App is best known as a navigational tool, but did you know that you can also use the app to explore the Bruce Trail Conservancy’s nature reserves and other protected natural areas?

View each of our 260+ areas on your choice of map background. Look for the green and white diamond markers indicating each property.

- Make sure to select “BTC Protected Natural Areas” in your map details so that they’re visible.
- Tap on a Bruce Trail diamond, then on the name of the property to learn more.
- Search for protected areas by name - like the ones in this issue of Bruce Trail Conservancy Magazine!

As each new area comes into our care, we’ll add it to the app and you can witness the growth of our conservation corridor.

**A note on visiting:** Most BTC protected natural areas are accessible to hikers along the Bruce Trail or our side trails. However, some areas currently have no trail on them and are not accessible to the public. You can use the app to easily see which BTC protected natural areas have trail on them.



# Volunteer Corner

## Seeking Nominations for Volunteer Awards

Do you know an outstanding volunteer? Someone who has gone above and beyond in support of the Bruce Trail and the work of the Bruce Trail Conservancy? Help us recognize their remarkable contribution by nominating them for one of our annual volunteer awards.

These awards have been established to honour those who have made an exceptional contribution to the Bruce Trail Conservancy and to formally recognize the time, skills, enthusiasm and passion they have shared in support of our mission.

### Volunteer of the Year Award

The Volunteer of the Year Award recognizes a volunteer who has shown extraordinary contributions to the Bruce Trail Conservancy within a single year (from April of the previous year to April of the current year). The award is not intended to recognize a lifetime of contributions as that would preclude volunteers who have been with us for a

short time. Any form of volunteering for the Bruce Trail Conservancy may be considered for this award.

### Honorary Membership

The Bruce Trail Conservancy Honorary Membership is a prestigious award given to a member who has made a lasting, significant volunteer contribution to the organization at both the Club and Conservancy levels. The nominee must have demonstrated leadership, innovation, and commitment and have accomplished significant achievements in furthering the Bruce Trail Conservancy

mission. The recipient is awarded a certificate and a complimentary lifetime membership.

### How to Nominate a Volunteer:

- 1) Request a nomination form for either award from Meghan Croll, BTC Volunteer Coordinator, at [mcroll@brucetrail.org](mailto:mcroll@brucetrail.org)
- 2) Submit completed nomination to [mcroll@brucetrail.org](mailto:mcroll@brucetrail.org) by June 1

See all past recipients of these awards at [brucetrail.org](http://brucetrail.org) > Resources > Volunteer Resources > Volunteer Awards. •



## The Calypso Orchid Environmental Award

CELEBRATING ENVIRONMENTAL ACHIEVEMENTS FOR THE NIAGARA ESCARPMENT

### Call for Nominations for the 2022 Calypso Orchid Award

Help us recognize the heroes of the Niagara Escarpment. We want to honour those individuals or groups who have made a difference for the future of the Niagara Escarpment through restoration initiatives, preservation work, and/or education.

The Calypso Orchid Environmental Award is awarded to an individual, volunteer group, institution or company that has demonstrated significant contribution to the restoration and preservation of the Bruce Trail and/or the Niagara

Escarpment Biosphere Reserve, or significantly enhanced the education of users or potential users of the Trail and/or the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve. The recipient needs not be a member of the Bruce Trail Conservancy.

### How to Nominate an Individual or Group:

- 1) Request a nomination form from Meghan Croll, BTC Volunteer Coordinator, at [mcroll@brucetrail.org](mailto:mcroll@brucetrail.org)
- 2) Submit completed nomination to [mcroll@brucetrail.org](mailto:mcroll@brucetrail.org) by June 1.

# HIKING IN MUD SEASON

Follow these tips to stay safe and hike responsibly when trails are muddy.

Spring can be one of the most enjoyable times of year to hike, with its warmer days, emerging wildflowers, and returning migrating birds. But it's also known as mud season, and for good reason. Melting snow and rainy weather cause puddles on the thawing ground. While deeper ground layers remain frozen, surface water doesn't drain quickly. Mud abounds.

For hikers and for trails, mud can be a challenge. Hiking in the mud can be messy, slippery, and tiring. Trails themselves are easily eroded and widened when they are muddy and hikers try to avoid getting wet and dirty. Here's how you can safely enjoy soggy trails without damaging them or the environment.

## Choose Your Hike Carefully

- Consider hiking in the early morning when the ground is still hard and frozen.
- Plan shorter hikes: Hiking in the mud can take longer and be more exhausting than in dry conditions.
- Avoid hiking in lowlands or areas that are typically swampy as these will likely be the wettest areas of the trail.
- Pick a stretch of trail with sun exposure if possible as it will be more likely to be dry than shady areas.

## Check for Trail Changes

- Some areas may close in particularly muddy conditions.
- As in any season, check for Trail closures and restrictions at [brucetrail.org/trail-changes](http://brucetrail.org/trail-changes) and the websites of parks and other public landowners.

## Walk in the Middle of the Trail or on Hard Surfaces

- You may be tempted to walk around mud puddles but doing so can damage vegetation, cause erosion, and widen the trail. Walk in the middle of the trail, through the mud to protect the integrity of the trail and neighboring plant life.

- If there are rocks or other hard surfaces on the trail, stick to these as much as possible. Avoid tree roots as these can be slippery when wet.

## Be Prepared to Get Dirty

- Wear solid, waterproof boots and walk through the mud rather than around it.
- Wear items that you don't mind getting muddy and that clean easily. Make sure these items are breathable in case you work up a sweat.
- Consider wearing gaiters (waterproof coverings for your lower legs, worn over your boots). These prevent mud and water from getting in your boots and keep the bottom of your pants clean.

## Pack These Helpful Extras

- Trekking poles can help with balance and prevent falls when walking through slippery mud.
- Traction devices/icers for your boots are handy to slip on if you encounter any lingering ice.

- Extra water and snacks will keep energy levels up and prevent dehydration while you're working hard.
- A change of clothes, socks and shoes in the car for after the hike will keep you comfortable and your car clean. Don't forget to bring a bag to put your boots in and contain the mud.

## Park Carefully

- Parking areas and road shoulders can get muddy too. Take extra care when parking to prevent your car from getting stuck.

## Be Prepared to Turn Around

If mud continues beyond isolated patches, or if a situation seems unsafe, turn around and try another area or another day. Sometimes the best option is to reschedule your hike until conditions dry out, and that's okay. Staying safe, keeping trails in good shape, and reducing our impact on the natural environment are what matters most. •



**Congratulations to our members who have completed an End-to-End of the entire Bruce Trail – an extraordinary physical and personal journey. The following are members who received their End-to-End recognition in 2021.**

E2E#	NAME	#OF TIMES	E2E#	NAME	#OF TIMES	E2E#	NAME	#OF TIMES	E2E#	NAME	#OF TIMES
3903	Ferguson, Marnie		3945	Rodrigues, Leigh		3987	Lawrence, Jennifer		4029	Vera, Lynda	
3904	Fregeau, Jim		3946	Flemington, Norm		3988	Personnic, Paul		4030	Oliver, Jim	
3905	Little, Austin		3947	Sugahara, Asao	2nd Time	3989	Profijt, Kaidjah		4031	Hart, Kathleen	
3906	Harvey, Nancy		3948	Huisman, Lucia		3990	Brinkman, Ineke		4032	Dreyer, Irene	
3907	Macfarlane, Douglas		3949	Ewert, Margaret	6th Time	3991	Corner, Margaret	11th Time	4033	Hay, Laurie	
3908	Baron, Norine		3950	Ewert, Gary	6th Time	3992	Heikkila, Anita		4034	McGrath, Aiden	
3909	Torry, Nicole		3951	Ewert, Margaret	7th Time	3993	Heikkila, Bill		4035	Tham, Michelle	
3910	Ilnicki, Wojtek		3952	Ewert, Gary	7th Time	3994	Rodrigues, Lorraine		4036	Watson, Courtney	
3911	Sabourin, Barb		3953	Junkin, Smadar	11th Time	3995	Corks, Cynthia		4037	Jiang, James	
3912	Fratric, Katica		3954	Doyle, Mike		3996	Jones, Marilyn		4038	Sun, Ting	
3913	Yellowlees, Christine		3955	Caetano, Jennifer		3997	Kent, Eleanor		4039	Cowell, Chantelle	
3914	Arlidge, Kip		3956	Mackenzie, Catharine		3998	Teasdale, Margaret		4040	Haddon, Reg E.	
3915	Schmidt, Ella		3957	Brabandere, Frances	3rd Time	3999	Keller, Samantha		4041	Parrish, Matthew	
3916	Rutherford, Sam		3958	Casekette, Mark		4000	Peller, Ruth-Anne		4042	Clancy, Dave	
3917	Rutherford, Janet		3959	Fung, Jonathan		4001	MacDonald, Rick		4043	Doel, Phyllis	
3918	Wise, Sue		3960	Hemmerick, Elizabeth		4002	MacDonald, Cathy		4044	McFadgen, D. Neil	9th Time
3919	Wise, Graham		3961	Holland, Karen		4003	MacDonald, Winston		4045	Junkin, Smadar	12th Time
3920	Kenny, Steve		3962	Kearney, Deanee		4004	Laros, Chrisine		4046	Stead, Graham	4th Time
3921	O'Dell, Margaret	5th Time	3963	Whaley, Sadie		4005	Paldino, Stephan		4047	Switzer, Jon	
3922	O'Dell, Margaret	6th Time	3964	Leroux, Olivia		4006	Lailey, Christopher	3rd Time	4048	Mai, Julliane	
3923	Burkholder, Ann		3965	Mannella, Susan		4007	Lailey, Christopher	4th Time	4049	Mai, Julliane	2nd Time
3924	Burkholder, Jim		3966	Pozin, Justin		4008	Issac, Rama		4050	Jennings, Lori	
3925	Thomas, Marie-Louise		3967	Pozin, Jacob		4009	Frain, Doug		4051	Russell-Hill, Teri	2nd Time
3926	Bonnema, Elise		3968	Stephen, Norman		4010	Jarvis, Tracy		4052	Hervieux, Rolland	
3927	Muralidhar, Poornima		3969	Venslovaitis, Ginnie		4011	Belic, Cath		4053	Wismer, Paul	
3928	Shi, Helen		3970	Verbeek, Mary		4012	Wong, Cita		4054	Wismer, Sarah	
3929	Li, Feng		3971	Verbeek, Kristine		4013	Young, Don	11th Time	4055	Wismer, Isaac	
3930	Ollerhead, Sandra		3972	Wanlin, Catherine		4014	Young, Don	12th Time	4056	Lightle, Vanessa	
3931	Madill, Larry		3973	Jones, Leanne		4015	Bowers, Steven		4057	Mowbray, Stacey	
3932	Mills, Amy		3974	Stewart, Lesley		4016	Johnson, Marleen		4058	Buxbaum, Tim	
3933	Green, Sandra	5th Time	3975	Bester, Phil & Jennifer		4017	Lam, Nancy		4059	Zehr, Rosemary	5th Time
3934	Corner, Margaret	10th Time	3976	Jacobs, Sheila		4018	Van Dyke, Jacquie	8th Time	4060	Zehr, Rosemary	6th Time
3935	Marchildon, Anne		3977	Johnson, David	2nd Time	4019	Couch, Karen		4061	Bergsma, Anita	
3936	McWhinnie, Zita		3978	Stratas, Mary		4020	Price, Trevor	2nd Time	4062	Franklin, Dave	2nd Time
3937	McWhinnie, Frazer		3979	Thorne, Joshua		4021	Amorin, Steve		4063	Schwan, Terry	
3938	Connolly, Robert		3980	Thorne, Amy		4022	Simmons, Laura		4064	O'Dell, Margaret	7th Time
3939	Fleming, Stewart		3981	Thorne, Liam		4023	Sikora, Robert		4065	Manning, Wendy	2nd Time
3940	Fleming, Stewart	2nd Time	3982	White, Steven	4th Time	4024	Lee, Luisa		4066	Manning, Wendy	3rd Time
3941	Fleming, Stewart	3rd Time	3983	Zamboni, Cathy		4025	Gupta, Smiti		4067	Stachow, Yolanta	
3942	Mitchell, Cheryl	6th Time	3984	Houle, Jennifer		4026	Kuiper, Cheryl		4068	Hutchinson, Ryan	
3943	Law, Stuart	2nd Time	3985	Hansen, Ross		4027	Keen, Jennifer		4069	Chamberlain, Dennis	5th Time
3944	Esau, Brent & Carmen		3986	Cressman, Doug		4028	Bosch, Corinne				



Photo: Wanderers Hiking Group



Photo: Wendee Hiking Group

# Trail Changes & Notices

DECEMBER 2021 - MARCH 2022, POST EDITION 30

FOR THE LATEST TRAIL CHANGE AND NOTICES, VISIT [BRUCETRAIL.ORG/TRAIL\\_CHANGES](http://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](http://brucetrail.org/trail_changes)

## Bruce Trail App Has All Latest Trail Changes

Our new Bruce Trail App for iOS and Android devices lets you have the most up-to-date trail data on your phone. Trail reroutes, temporary closures, parking details, and BTC protected areas are updated regularly and are ready when you open your app. Visit [brucetrail.org/pages/bruce-trail-app](http://brucetrail.org/pages/bruce-trail-app) for details.

## Reservations Required

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

- Conservation Halton ([conservationhalton.ca](http://conservationhalton.ca)): Mount Nemo, Rattlesnake Point, Crawford Lake, Hilton Falls CAs
- Ontario Parks ([reservations.ontarioparks.com](http://reservations.ontarioparks.com)): Forks of the Credit, Mono Cliffs

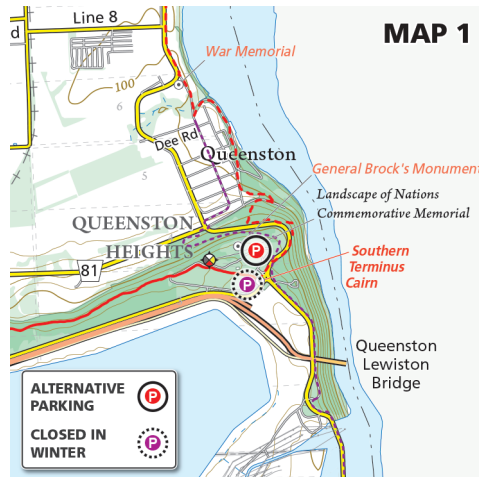
Reservations are not required in the winter but will resume in spring 2022 for:

- Hamilton Conservation Authority ([conservationhamilton.ca](http://conservationhamilton.ca)): Spencer Gorge CA (Webster Falls, Tew Falls, Dundas Peak)
- Credit Valley Conservation ([cvc.ca](http://cvc.ca)): Cheltenham Badlands CA
- Bruce Peninsula National Park ([pc.gc.ca/bruce](http://pc.gc.ca/bruce)): Halfway Dump and at the Grotto / Cyprus Lake
- Lion's Head, McCurdy Drive ([lionsheadparking.ca](http://lionsheadparking.ca))

## NIAGARA

### Map 1 - Queenston Heights, Winter Parking

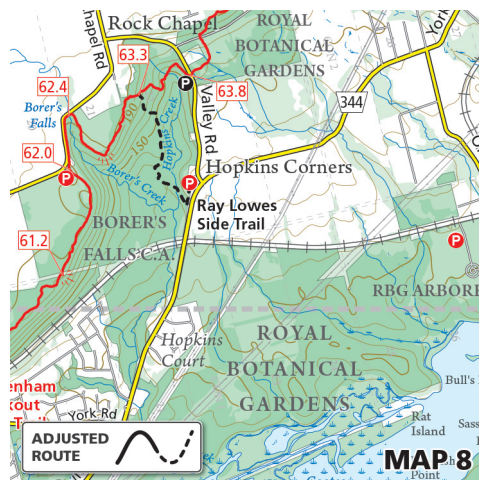
There is no winter maintenance at the Queenston Heights parking area. Alternative parking is available 200 metres up the road at the Queenston Heights Restaurant during the winter months.



## IROQUOIA

### Map 8 - Ray Lowes Side Trail

Named for one of the co-founders of the Bruce Trail and lifelong conservationist, Ray Lowes, this side trail has taken on a new configuration as shown in the map. Ray Lowes Side Trail = 1 km

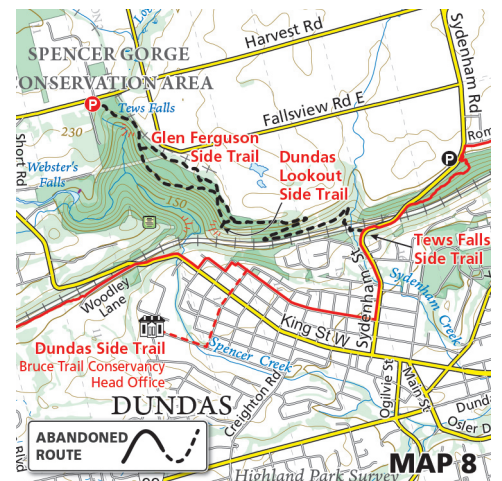


## Map 8 - Spencer Gorge Conservation Area

The Bruce Trail Conservancy has temporarily handed responsibility for the maintenance of side trails within Spencer Gorge Conservation Area to Hamilton Conservation Authority (HCA) while HCA manages access during COVID-19.

Affected side trails include Tew's Falls Side Trail, Dundas Lookout Side Trail and Glen Ferguson Side Trail.

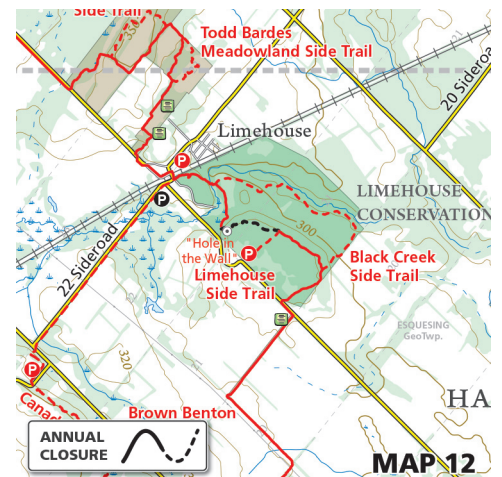
These side trails remain open but are not currently maintained by the Bruce Trail Conservancy.



## TORONTO

### Map 12 - Limehouse Conservation Area, Intermittent Winter Closures

A portion of the main Bruce Trail within Limehouse Conservation Areas is closed by Credit Valley Conservation throughout the winter months due to potential icy conditions.





## CALEDON HILLS

### Map 18 - Hockleycrest - Seasonal Reroute

This trail change is in effect seasonally, December 1 - April 1. A portion of the main Trail is closed to hikers and snowshoers, but remains open for the exclusive use of cross-country skiers. This route is denoted as a purple dashed line on the accompanying map.

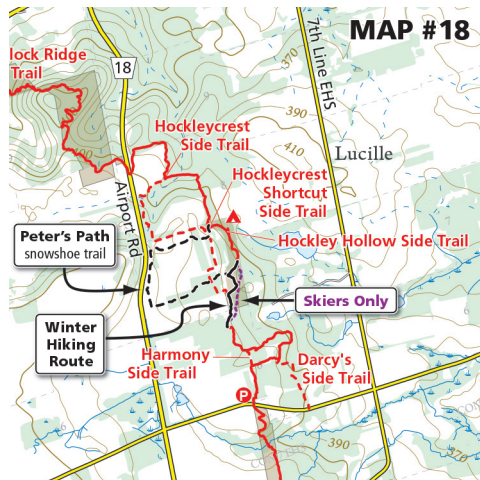
A 500-metre alternate route has been opened to accommodate hiking and snowshoeing only; skiing is not allowed on this section.

In addition, a loop trail named Peter's Path has been created exclusively for snowshoeing, passing through pine and spruce plantations, open grasslands and regenerating fields.

For more on the Hockleycrest ski trails including maps and conditions visit <http://hockleycrest.blogspot.com>

Winter Hiking Route = 500 metres

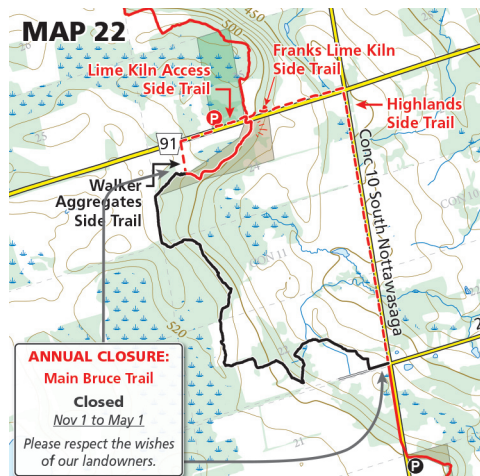
Peter's Path = 1.5 km



## BLUE MOUNTAINS

### Map 22 - Duntroon, Annual Closure

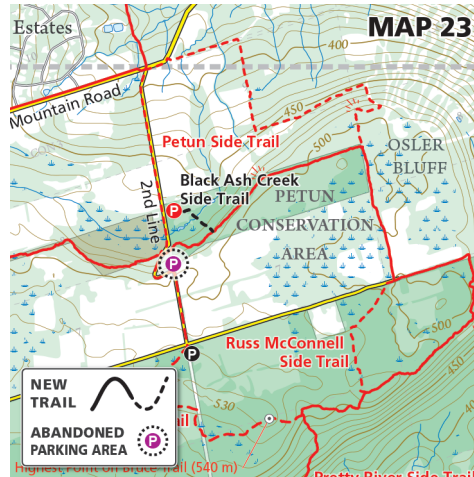
By request of the landowner, the main Bruce Trail illustrated on the map is closed Nov. 1 - May 1. Hikers are asked to use the Highlands Side Trail as the seasonal thoroughfare.



### Map 23 - Black Ash Creek Side Trail, New Trail and New Parking

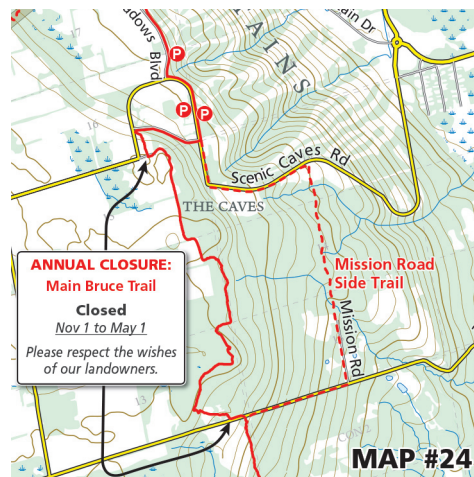
A new side trail has been blazed in the Petun Conservation Area as illustrated on the map. This side trail starts at a newly created parking area maintained by Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority and provides access to the main Bruce Trail. Daily parking fees apply. 20 car capacity. This lot will be plowed in winter.

Black Ash Creek Side Trail = 340 metres



### Map 24 - Scenic Caves area, Annual Closure

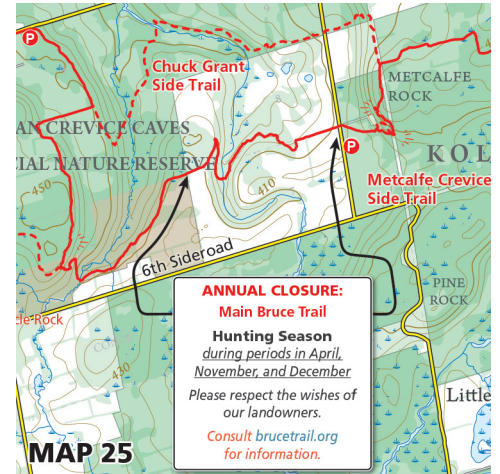
By request of the landowner, the main Bruce Trail from 12th Sideroad north to County Road 119 is closed Nov. 1 - May 1. The Mission Road Side Trail serves as the temporary thoroughfare.



## BEAVER VALLEY

### Map 25 - Kolapore area, Annual Closure

By request of the landowner, the area denoted on the map is closed annually to accommodate hunting season. During this time, the Chuck Grant Side Trail can be used as a thoroughfare for through hiking. Closure dates: Nov. 1-6, 2021, Nov. 29 - Dec. 4, 2021, and Apr. 25-30, 2022. Trail closure notices will be posted at trail access points.



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OCTOBER 1, 2021 – DECEMBER 31, 2021

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Gifts were received to honour these special people:

## Anniversary

Diane & Bill Hambleton  
 (56 Years)

## Birthday

Suzanne Tokarsky

## Christmas

Annette Balgord  
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 The Platers

## In Honour

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Sally Cohen & Dave Moule, for hosting the CHBTC Christmas Tree Fundraiser  
 Linda Vezina, for her CHBTC leadership

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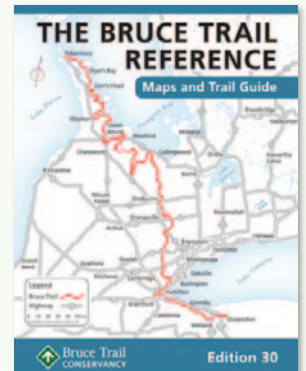
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**Members: \$15.00 \$7.50**

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Featuring the original Bruce Trail logo from 1963. 100% Cotton. Velcro strap. Khaki green with a weathered look.

**Members: \$20, Non-Members: \$25**



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Great for on the trail or around town. One size (7-13). 80% combed cotton, 17% polyamide, 3% elastane. **\$13.95**



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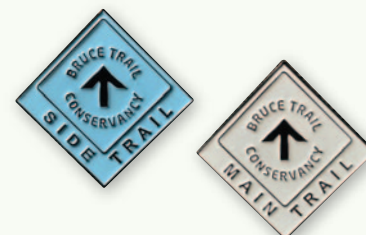
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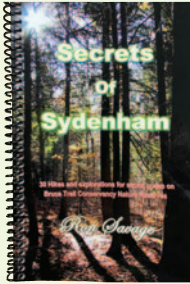
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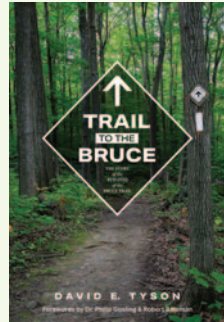
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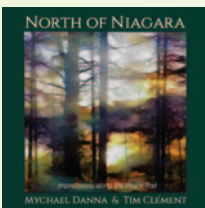
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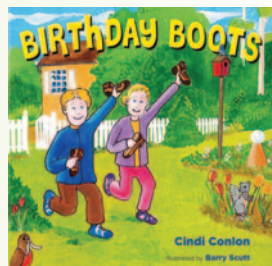


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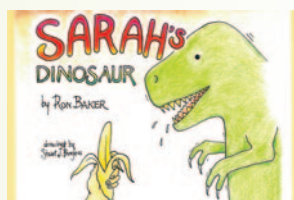


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\$75.00 *Not available online.*



Learn more about End-to-Ends at [brucetrail.org/pages/explore-the-trail/end-to-ends](http://brucetrail.org/pages/explore-the-trail/end-to-ends)

# A ribbon of wilderness is coming to life.

You make remarkable things possible through your membership, donations and volunteer support.

Together we are preserving the Niagara Escarpment, restoring its unique biodiversity, and making it available for generations to enjoy along a wondrous footpath.

**Special thanks to everyone who supported the creation of Balsam Wetlands and Eugenia Woods Nature Reserves with a year-end gift to the Bruce Trail Conservancy.**

You have preserved 310 acres of irreplaceable wetland and forest habitats which will be stewarded and explored as part of a growing conservation corridor.

Learn more about our newest nature reserves inside on pages 18-19.

Photo: Brian Popelier



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