



## The Newsletter of the Beaver Valley Bruce Trail Club

Box 3251 Meaford Ontario N4L 1A5 / [www.beavervalleybruce-trail.org](http://www.beavervalleybruce-trail.org)

*Preserving a ribbon of wilderness, for everyone, forever.*

### How Can We Best Protect the Niagara Escarpment? Land Use Controls + Land Purchases

by Linda Pim

As we hike the Bruce Trail or maintain our own trail sections in the Beaver Valley, how a particular property came to be protected from development may not be top of mind. While revelling in nature’s beauty around us, though, we should celebrate the huge accomplishments over the past half century in both land use controls and land acquisition on the Niagara Escarpment.

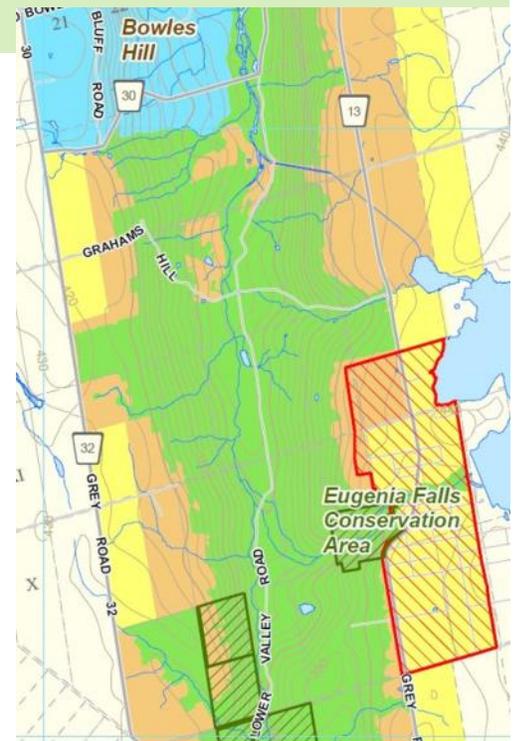
It was 54 years ago, in 1967, that then-Premier of Ontario, John Robarts, called for “a wide-ranging study of the Niagara Escarpment with a view to preserving its entire length.” A tall order! The study team, led by University of Waterloo planning professor Len Gertler, delivered its ground-breaking report a year later, setting in motion a process, rife with public controversy, that ultimately led to the 1985 approval of the **Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP)** by the Ontario Cabinet.

While the Gertler report is lauded for spawning land use controls on the escarpment, it also envisaged a major role for land acquisition as a preservation tool. The report called for the purchase of lands and easements in areas of outstanding natural features and areas required for a parks system. The total estimated cost of the recommended acquisitions, in 1967 dollars, was \$31.5 million over eight years. Indeed, the provincial government made significant land purchases for conservation along the escarpment into the early 1970s.

We’ll return to land acquisition below, but this article’s focus is the role of the Niagara Escarpment Plan. The NEP was the first and largest land use plan in Canada with environmental protection as the primary objective. Its ecosystem approach was novel back in 1985. The NEP begins with a clear statement of its purpose: **“to provide for the maintenance of the Niagara Escarpment and land in its vicinity substantially as a continuous natural environment and to ensure only such development occurs as is compatible with that natural environment.”**

The NEP has a **hierarchy of seven land use designations**, with decreasing levels of protection from development the farther we go from the cliff face (whether it’s exposed or buried). So we proceed from the most protected Escarpment Natural Area – green on NEP maps – through the somewhat less protected brown of the Escarpment Protection Area to the less protected yellow of the Escarpment Rural Area – see [map](#).

These three designations constitute 93 per cent of the NEP area – see [Table 1](#) (on page 4). The remaining seven per cent consists of Mineral Resource Extraction Areas (pits and quarries), Minor Urban Centres (villages, such as Kimberley and Eugenia), Urban Areas (parts of towns and cities) and Escarpment Recreation Areas (such as the Blue Mountains and the Beaver Valley Ski Club).



#### NIAGARA ESCARPMENT PLAN AREA

Plan Designations

-  Escarpment Natural Area
-  Escarpment Protection Area
-  Escarpment Rural Area
-  Escarpment Recreation Area
-  Mineral Resource Extraction Area
-  Urban Area
-  Minor Urban Centre

#### OVERLAY

-  Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System

/ ... continued on page 4

## Beaver Valley Bruce Trail Club Officers and Support Volunteers

To contact the Club, or any of its Officers or Support Volunteers personally, please write to:  
[info@beavervalleybruce trail.org](mailto:info@beavervalleybruce trail.org)  
and your inquiry will be directed to the right person.

### Directors

President	Jill Smith-Brodie	Land Stewardship	Mike Osborne
Vice-President	Nadia Dubyk (Acting)	Communications and Publicity	Margaret Yaraskavitch
Past President	Ros Rossetti	Volunteers and Membership	Kelly Killoran
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Information Services	Mike Osborn	Director at Large	Joan Nuffield

### Support Volunteers

Newsletter Editor	Joan Nuffield	Webmaster	Irena Marinko
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Motorized Grass Cutting Crew Leader	Peter Bryce	Land Securement Secretariat Representative	Jill Smith-Brodie
Advertising Revenues	Steve Griffiths	Invasive Species Managers	Bob Hann and Joan Nuffield

**Emergency contact:** For trees down on the Trail, etc., please contact Blain Horsley at [info@beavervalleybruce trail.org](mailto:info@beavervalleybruce trail.org). For assistance with grass cutting on a section of Trail that is accessible by a rider-mower, contact Peter Bryce, and to report any other problem with Trail maintenance, please contact Bob Hann at [info@beavervalleybruce trail.org](mailto:info@beavervalleybruce trail.org).

## Special Notice Hiking on the Bruce Trail

The Bruce Trail Conservancy has requested that, for the safety of all, **the organized hiking program of all nine Bruce Trail Clubs continue to be paused until all areas along the Niagara Escarpment and the Greater Toronto Area are at least in the orange zone according to provincial COVID-19 public health rankings.**

Hikers who hail from urban areas tend to feel “safe” when they arrive in a more rural area, so they relax — and sometimes, they also drop their guard.

**Please, choose your place to hike with due regard to health directives, maintain safe distances, step off the Trail to allow others to pass safely, and observe all other signage and public health precautions.**

Regardless of our respective “home zones,” we are all in this together.

**Volunteers :** Like many volunteer organizations, the Beaver Valley Bruce Trail Club is always looking for interested people to serve on the Board, on the Trail, or in other capacities. If you would like to help out, please contact Kelly Killoran at [info@beavervalleybruce trail.org](mailto:info@beavervalleybruce trail.org).

**Newsletter Submissions :** Are you a hiking addict, a local history buff, a budding auteur, an amateur geologist or naturalist? We would love to print any articles, photos or stories that you send us. Deadline for submissions, Fall Issue: August 15, 2021. Send to Editor of “Beaver Tales” at [info@beavervalleybruce trail.org](mailto:info@beavervalleybruce trail.org).

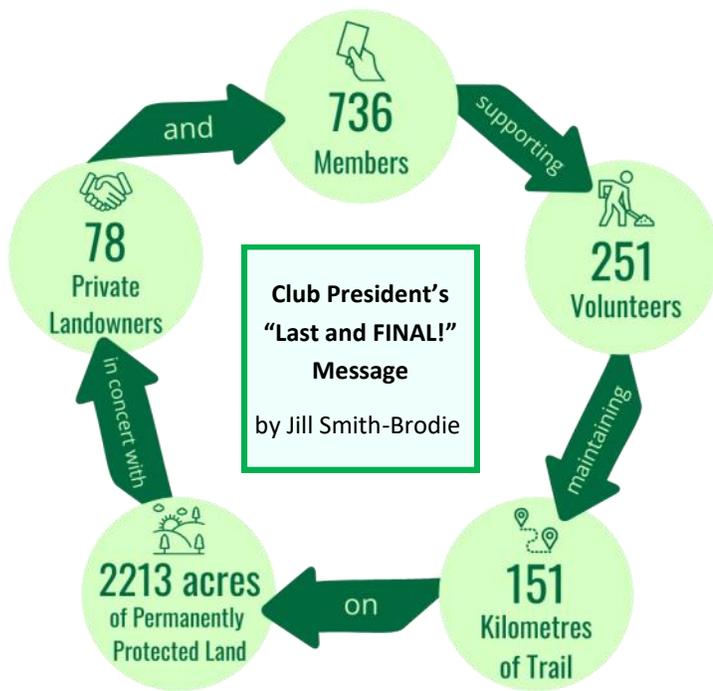
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**Advertising in “Beaver Tales” :** Ad rates for one year (3 issues): Business card size \$60; ¼ page \$120; ½ page \$180. Contact Steve Griffiths for advertising information at [info@beavervalleybruce trail.org](mailto:info@beavervalleybruce trail.org).

**The Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC):** Box 857, Hamilton, L8N 3N9 / 800-665-4453 / 905-529-6821 / Fax 905-529-6832 / [www.bruce trail.org](http://www.bruce trail.org) / [info@bruce trail.org](mailto:info@bruce trail.org). **MISSION STATEMENT: Preserving a ribbon of wilderness, for everyone, forever.**

The dawn is breaking – or so it seems  
We’re too young to reason, too grown-up to dream.

– Bryan Ferry



Spring is nature's way of saying, "Let's party!", and after the events of this past year we are all ready to do just that, while following Covid guidelines of course! We have had an unprecedented number of visitors flocking to our well-marked and well-maintained trails this past year. Our Trail meanders through public lands, Bruce Trail Conservancy secured lands, and private lands. As responsible users of the Bruce Trail, we follow the user's code of conduct, we respect all signage, follow the blazes, and stay on the foot-path.

Parking at Trailhead locations has been a huge issue for users, as well as local residents. Bruce Trail Conservancy staff are working with the Clubs on parking solutions, but this will take time. Meanwhile, visitors to the Trail should have a back-up plan for the day: if the parking area is full, and in many cases this past year it has been beyond full, then please be respectful and execute Plan B. We live in farm country. Farm vehicles need wide turning areas to access fields and driveways. Do not park close to any of these access points. Many of our roads are narrow and are used by wide vehicles carrying equipment, so cars should never park on both sides of any roadway. We are all ambassadors for our Club and our community, so spread the word! We need the continued support of the landowners who so generously allow us access to their lands and the residents who live and work in the area.

As with all Bruce Trail Clubs, social and hiking events have been put on hold and the public is encouraged to visit Trail sections only in their own home areas. In other words we are not out of the woods yet! **The hiking program of all nine Bruce Trail Clubs continues to be paused until all areas along the Niagara Escarpment and the Greater Toronto Area are at least in the orange zone according to provincial COVID-19 public health rankings.**

Like many organizations, the Beaver Valley Bruce Trail Club Board and Club committees have "Zoomed" their way through the past year! To responsibly deal with many of the challenges and issues associated with Covid especially, the Board has formed a Working Committee charged with developing a special two-year Strategic Plan for us. The Plan, which will be shared more broadly in the coming months, will help to guide our activities and set the course for a number of key initiatives that together will help us all continue to preserve and enjoy our wonderful Trail.

The Beaver Valley Bruce Trail Club's 58<sup>th</sup> AGM will be a virtual event. The Club's AGM package containing the minutes of last year's AGM, Directors' reports, list of candidates standing for election and our financial status will be sent out to our membership in early June. Members will have a week to review the material and cast a vote. I encourage all of you to take the time to cast your vote so we can continue as a viable Board.

This is my last newsletter as President of the Beaver Valley Club. I had indicated I would be stepping down, after five years as President, after last year's AGM. A special thank you to my newsletter "boss," Joan Nuffield: you always do an amazing job, Joan. It has to be a decade or more that you have edited the *Beaver Tales* newsletter for the Beaver Valley Club.

It has been an honour to work with all the inspiring and dedicated members of the Beaver Valley Club Board as well as all the volunteers who give so generously.

***"Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless."* – Sherry Anderson**

**May the Forest be with You,**

**Jill**

The NEP lists permitted land uses in each of the above designations – with fewer uses allowed in the more protected areas – and has detailed development criteria that direct how a permitted use (such as a new home) must proceed – to protect steep slopes, waterways, trees, striking escarpment landscape views, etc.

One of the hallmarks of the NEP protection system is that it prevents the suburbanization of the countryside (e.g., scattered development) through strict limits on the creation of new lots. Also, plans of subdivision are prohibited in the countryside. For sure, our population is growing, but the NEP directs most residential and other growth to the urban and recreation areas.

**The NEP is implemented by the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC)**, a provincial agency, and its staff in Georgetown and Owen Sound. Most development requires an NEC development permit – for example, new single dwellings, road construction, pits and quarries, and changes to the use of existing structures. There are exemptions – for example, farming activities don’t require permits. Local municipalities’ official plans must conform to the NEP; as a provincial plan, it takes precedence. Anyone planning a development needs NEC clearance before going to the town office for municipal approvals.

**Table 1: Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP) – Land Use Designations**

Designation	Area	% of NEP Area (2017 Plan)
Escarpment Natural Area	181,508 acres	38 %
Escarpment Protection Area	155,682 acres	32 %
Escarpment Rural Area	112,148 acres	23 %
Other (Mineral Resource Extraction Area, Escarpment Recreation Area, Minor Urban Centre, Urban Area)	32,448 acres	7 %
<b>TOTAL NEP Area</b>	<b>481,786 acres</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Source: Niagara Escarpment Commission

**The NEP permit system, now in place for 36 years, works well overall.** Only 2.8 per cent of development permit applications in 2019-20 were refused by the commission (eight of 284 processed). They are turned down when they don’t meet the plan’s policies. In other words, the vast majority of proposed development is in sync with the plan and so is approved, always with a set of conditions that must be met. Landowner applicants or others such as neighbouring landowners can appeal a permit decision (whether it was approved or refused). Only 7.4 per cent of permit decisions were appealed in 2019-20.

Proposals at major variance with NEP policies need to go the route of an amendment to the plan – a more onerous process taking one to two years or more and requiring a decision by the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry or, in rare cases, the Ontario Cabinet.

Beaver Valley BTC members may recall a development permit case in 2018-19: A snowmobile club sought an NEC permit to install two large culverts along the unmaintained 3<sup>rd</sup> Line D road allowance (south of Sideroad 25) at a small tributary of the Beaver River, thereby allowing for passage of snow-grooming equipment and calling for approval of this route as a dedicated snowmobile trail. Major problem: in the Escarpment Natural Area land use designation where the culverts would go, motorized trail activities are not a permitted use; these areas are too environmentally sensitive for that. The application went before the 17-member NEC (Cabinet appointees – nine representing the public at large, plus eight municipal representatives) several times, was first approved in principle but ultimately was refused. The snowmobile club appealed and an independent hearing officer, in declining to hear the appeal due to an important legal issue raised by an opponent, effectively confirmed the NEC’s refusal decision. This case points to differing values among local landowners about acceptable uses of escarpment lands – an enduring feature of escarpment history. But this proposal was a clear violation of NEP policies in the most protected part of the plan area.

**The Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System (NEPOSS)** is at the heart of the NEP. Its total area is 22.6 per cent of the NEP area (108,814 acres of the total of 481,786 acres). There are 163 parks properties with diverse ownership, linked by the Bruce Trail. The “Georgian Bay/Grey County segment” of NEPOSS consists of 53 properties, from the Spirit Rock Conservation Area north of Wiarton over to the Rob Roy Forest northwest of Singhampton.

**The Bruce Trail Conservancy** is treated in the NEP as if it were a public (government) body with regard to the BTC’s role in securing and managing the Bruce Trail corridor. The Bruce Trail is a permitted use in all seven NEP land use designations. The plan has policies that apply specifically to the Bruce Trail as an essential component of the parks system. Policies also recognize the long-term goal of securing a permanent route for the Trail and the determination of the Optimum Route by the BTC and cooperating landowners. There are criteria for developing the Trail in a manner that has minimum environmental impact. Some Trail infrastructure requires NEC development permits (e.g., bridges, parking lots).

We should consider the land area covered by the NEP to be the bare minimum necessary for protecting escarpment ecosystems. Due to pushback from some landowners and municipalities to the Proposed Plan in the late 1970s – some people felt the planning controls would be what they angrily called “expropriation without compensation” – the area covered by the approved NEP in 1985 was a whopping 63 per cent smaller than what the government had originally proposed after the Gertler report.

**It was precisely because of the Niagara Escarpment Plan that the escarpment was ripe for the designation as a United Nations Biosphere Reserve that was awarded in 1990.** Biosphere Reserves are demonstration areas for both the conservation of biodiversity and the promotion of environmentally appropriate development. The NEP is an excellent model for a Biosphere Reserve because its hierarchy of land use designations and permitted uses corresponds so well to the core area, buffer zone and transition area of a Biosphere Reserve. In recognition of Indigenous truth and reconciliation, and sensitivity to language, many of Canada’s 18 UN Biosphere Reserves have removed “reserve” from their names and

are now formally called simply biospheres – in our case, the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere (NEB), a change made just last year. The NEB designation confers no legal protection (the NEP does that very well), but is an international feather in our cap.

The Niagara Escarpment Plan has been amended and improved with each legally mandated plan review. The 2017 plan is more environmentally protective than the 2005 plan, which protected land better than the 1994 plan, which in turn improved on the original 1985 plan. An important feature of the 2017 NEP is that it recognizes for the first time the significant landscape changes on the escarpment since 1985. For example, because of both natural ecological succession (e.g., fields to old fields to forests) and tree-planting over the years, the total area of land that met the criteria to be Escarpment Natural Area in 2017 increased to 38 per cent of the total NEP area from the previous 30 per cent. There was a corresponding reduction in the Escarpment Protection and Escarpment Rural Areas. More Escarpment Natural Area means more land with fewer developments permitted – more of the most protected land.

**Even the most environmentally protective land use policies won't always achieve the total preservation that we might seek for certain special properties – places with species at risk, cliff ecosystems, large, intact forests and/or other ecological attributes where we simply don't want to see any development at all. That's where land acquisition has a key role to play.** The BTC manages 12,623 acres of escarpment lands, the largest acreage for a non-government organization. Others are the Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy (5,032 acres), the Nature Conservancy of Canada (4,116 acres) and Ontario Nature (829 acres). The NGO-managed lands are a significant component of all escarpment lands owned or managed for public-interest purposes, which total 25 per cent of the Niagara Escarpment Plan area – see [Table 2](#). While not all federal, provincial and municipal lands are set aside in parks or other protected natural areas, the majority are.

**Table 2: Niagara Escarpment Lands Owned and/or Managed for Public-Interest Purposes**

Conservation Authorities	30,329 acres
Federal (including Parks Canada & other agencies)	12,902 acres
Provincial (including agencies & provincial utilities)	47,000 acres
Municipal governments & their utilities	10,265 acres
Bruce Trail Conservancy	12,623 acres
Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy	5,032 acres
Nature Conservancy of Canada	4,116 acres
Ontario Nature	829 acres
<b>Total lands owned/managed for public-interest purposes</b>	<b>123,096 acres (25.5% of NEP area)</b>
<b>Total area of Niagara Escarpment Plan</b>	<b>481,786 acres</b>

Sources: Niagara Escarpment Commission, BTC

**We will always need the Niagara Escarpment Plan as the protective blanket that covers the escarpment, as the complement to land purchases, because we cannot rely on land acquisition on a large scale.** That would be prohibitively expensive; for that reason, the land acquisition that is within the means of governments and conservation organizations, while vitally important, will always afford only a patchwork of preservation. The most environmentally important escarpment lands cannot all be preserved through land purchases.

At the time of the first approval of the Niagara Escarpment Plan in 1985, \$20 million was set aside by the Province to be used over a 10-year period for land acquisition, and it was. Much smaller pots of provincial money became available after that, but none in recent years. Conservation authorities have been left to raise acquisition funds on their own. Consider recent land prices: When the purchase of the Driftwood Cove property near Tobermory was announced in December 2018, the federal government contributed \$22.5 million and the BTC \$1.9 million, achieving an impressive increase of 3,272 acres in the size of Bruce Peninsula National Park. This jaw-droppingly large and beautiful purchase adds 6.5 km of continuous Georgian Bay shoreline (almost a quarter of the park's shoreline) and secures 8 km of the Bruce Trail. The price-tag of \$24.4 million reminds us of the high costs of acquiring pivotal properties at today's prices. Smaller, strategic acquisitions are more feasible.

The future of the Niagara Escarpment remains quite bright, in my view: to date, provincial governments of all political stripes have supported the Niagara Escarpment Plan. The plan is now generally well accepted by the public and escarpment landowners. I would argue that the UN biosphere designation means too much to Ontario's international reputation for a government to risk the embarrassment of losing the biosphere status if the NEP were repealed. However, this is no time for complacency: for example, the extent to which Commissioners on the NEC support NEP policies in their decision-making is a reflection of the government that appointed them. Given the current government's approach to environmental protection, right now is a time to be especially vigilant around the NEC's decisions.

We must continue to support the Niagara Escarpment Plan at the same time as we support purchases of important properties where total preservation, rather than the plan's protection policies, is the best solution.

For more information about the Niagara Escarpment Plan and to view the maps, visit the Niagara Escarpment Commission's website: [www.escarpment.org](http://www.escarpment.org)

With specific questions about lands in the Grey-Bruce area, contact the NEC's Owen Sound office: 519-371-1001, or email [necowensound@ontario.ca](mailto:necowensound@ontario.ca)

*Linda Pim, a member of the Beaver Valley BTC, is a land use planner and from 2017 to 2019, was a Commissioner on the Niagara Escarpment Commission.*

**Health and Safety Corner**  
**... Stay Safe!**



**Hunting Season—Spring 2021**

Please take care when out during hunting seasons. Confirmed dates will be available in late April 2021, when the 2021 Hunting Regulations Summary is released at <https://www.ontario.ca/document/ontario-hunting-regulations-summary>.

**Ticks and Lyme Disease**

Protect yourself from Lyme disease by avoiding long grass, wearing long-sleeved shirts and tucking your pant hems into thick socks while hiking. Stay on the Trail, as brushing against plants can allow ticks to attach to your clothing. When you get home, check for ticks on your body (or have a friend assist with this step). For more information, check out the very scary facts at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/lyme-disease>.

**... and Keep Others Safe!**

Respect provincial health guidelines when choosing a place to hike and enjoying our beautiful natural areas. For more information, check out <https://brucetrail.org/pages/news-events/covid-19-updates>.

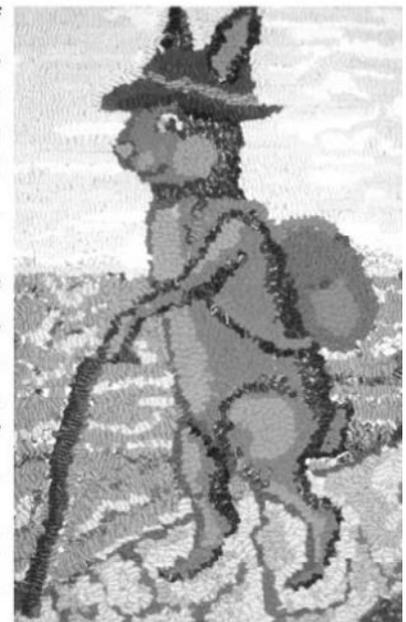


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# Trail Development and Maintenance: Director's Report

by Bob Hann



Talk about mixed feelings!

## On the one hand:

- \* Enough of winter is still here to make many types of trail work inadvisable – and this is after all Canada, so we know we are still in for some very “interesting” weather yet this spring
- \* We are still not out of the Covid-19 woods
- \* The increased volume of visitors – and the different attitudes of a small but significant sub-set of them – over the past few months has posed serious threats to certain Trails
- \* And over the last few months we have lost some very fine members of our team of Trail Captains.

## But luckily, there is an “other hand”:

- \* The smell of spring is so strong that it is almost unbearable
- \* Covid-19 vaccines are just around the corner (especially for the oldies among us – including me)
- \* All parts of our Club have been working hard to develop responses to the new challenges to our Trails. An additional source of hope is our renewed sense of partnership with some of our local partners. In particular, Bryan Plumstead, the Tourism Director of Grey County, deserves special thanks for supporting an online multi-stakeholder forum to facilitate a better understanding of and possible solutions to challenges related to outdoor winter activities in Grey County.
- \* Our TD&M team remains strong with the addition of a strong new crop of volunteer TCs and trail workers. There is something about the work we do that continues to draw new volunteers.
- \* And finally, given a bit of luck with permit approvals and funding, we will have a whole slew of very exciting trail development projects on the horizon.

**However, our strength and hope remains our volunteers.** Please join me in saying “goodbye and thank you”, or “welcome”, to the following:

- \* Len Gertler Side Trail: John McCullam (TC of TM03B) and Sandy and George McMaster (TCs of TM03A) have agreed to help Linda Pim take care of the Len Gertler Side Trail
- \* TM10B (south from Duncan Caves) and the Town Line Intercept Side Trail: Welcome to Jeff Reynolds, who will be taking over from Vanecia Tavares and Mike Millard
- \* TM15 (south from the OPG surge towers): Welcome to James and Margaret Parkin (Land Stewards of the Hughes property), who will be joining the current TC, Norine Flaherty, as co-TCs
- \* TM16C (south from Campbell's Hill Road): Welcome to Judy Halpern and Rob Spackman, who will be joining the current TC, April Poppe, as co-TC's
- \* TM25 (south from Talisman Ski Club): Welcome to Lisa Wilson, who will be taking over as TC from Jill Smith-Brodie and David Brodie
- \* TM29 (north from 16c): Welcome to Jan and Wilma Van Der Woerd, who will be taking over as TCs from Joe Buchanan
- \* TM31A (along SR 22B and then on Allen property): Welcome to Kevin Drynan, who will be taking over as TC from Bob Fitz-James
- \* And welcome to an amazing number of new additions to our TD&M Flying Squad, Mowing Team, Trail Scouts and/or whipper-snipper teams, including: Alistar Boulby, Mike Ready, Jeff Reynolds, Rick Hayden, Murray Cass, Nicole Tory, Christopher Baines, and (just the other week) Scott Harvie, Kim Taylor, David Giles and Warren Smith.



## Conservation News and Notes

### Don't Plant that Norway Maple!

Too many Canadians are planting Norway Maples — and they should even consider replacing any they already have with Sugar Maples, says local arborist Marco Reichel. The Tar Spot disease which plagues Norway Maples is now jumping to our native maples. “We are getting worried that this could have a devastating effect on native Sugar Maples,” says Reichel. In addition, according to Reichel, “The fast growth rate and dense canopy formed by Norway Maples hinder the development of other understory shrubs and trees, and the Norway Maple is less beneficial for native animal and insect species.” Cities and towns in Canada are realizing this threat, putting a stop to planting them and starting to implement strategies to reduce numbers in the urban canopy: see Collingwood's new Urban Forestry Plan as an example. The rest of us should all stay away too!

### Biodiversity Boosts Human Happiness

New research suggests that happiness is correlated with hearing the song of a variety of many different bird species. Data from the 2012 *European Quality of Life Survey* were used to study the connection between species diversity in an area and the life satisfaction of more than 26,000 adults from 26 European countries. Species diversity was measured based on the diversity of bird species, as a particularly high number of bird species can be found in areas with a high proportion of near-natural and diverse landscapes that hold numerous greenspaces and bodies of water. For further reading, see <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/12/201204110246.htm>

### Planning Act changes

Environmental protection groups are sounding alarms about a provision in the Ontario government's Bill 257 (*Supporting Broadband and Infrastructure Act*, introduced March 4, 2021), which contains a proposed amendment to the *Planning Act*.

Ontario's land use planning system, through the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) under the *Planning Act*, normally prohibits most development on important lands such as prime farmland, provincially significant wetlands and threatened and endangered species habitat. The current government has hugely increased the use of minister's zoning orders (MZOs), a previously seldom-used power in the *Planning Act* which allows the Minister of Municipal Affairs to override municipal official plans and zoning bylaws, usually to approve developments that the Province wants to push forward.

Bill 257 would remove the requirement for development enabled through MZOs to be consistent with the PPS – i.e., those important natural and agricultural lands would no longer be protected on properties covered by MZOs. The only exception in the bill is MZOs in the Greenbelt (including the Niagara Escarpment Plan area in Grey, Simcoe and Bruce counties), which would continue to have the PPS apply to them.

An MZO requires no public notice or consultation and provides no right of appeal. The Bill 257 provision would also apply retroactively to already-issued MZOs. This timing is thought to be intended to thwart an ongoing court case that challenges development in the Lower Duffins Creek provincially significant wetland in Pickering, facilitated through an MZO issued last fall.

For further information, visit the websites of [Environmental Defence](#) and [Ontario Nature](#) to sign up for their email updates.



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- it relieves stress and boosts mental health
- despite the inevitable gelatos ☺, it improves your fitness (especially a hiking holiday with us!)
- it's an education! Travel teaches us economy, politics, history, geography, and sociology in a hands-on that way no class ever will
- it takes you out of your comfort zone and teaches you to be patient, more confident and to prioritize what really matters
- Traveling is a way to learn about distant people and cultures for yourself and not through the eyes of the media or our friends

So when the time is right, **we'll be ready!** Although we don't know when that day will come, there is hope on the horizon. Put your name on our [INTERESTED LIST](#), and we will notify you when we are ready to accept reservations for a particular trip (no obligation).

**Dominica \* Portugal \* Japan \* Ireland  
Amalfi Coast (Italy) \* Corfu (Greece)  
Kenya \* Provence & Cote d'Azur  
Tour du Mont Blanc  
Galapagos Islands \* Slovenija**

## IN THE MEANTIME...

We would love to keep you informed and engaged. Here are 3 easy ways to keep in touch that would benefit us both:

### 1. Follow us on Facebook.

We post daily on topics such as hiking tips & tricks, travel information, gear reviews, trip announcements and so much more. Plus, we're pretty entertaining ☺

### 2. Follow me on Instagram.

Want to see amazing photos? Follow @maddhiker on Instagram. Maddhiker - that's me! Full disclosure - I sometimes also post pictures of my family and dogs.

### 3. Sign up for our monthly e-newsletter.

Email us at [info@letshike.com](mailto:info@letshike.com) and ask to be put on our mailing list. You can unsubscribe any time, and we will never share your information with anyone.

## Stay positive & test negative!

We look forward to hiking with you again soon!

TICO # 50023501 & 50023502

## Beaver Valley

## Bruce Trail Club



### BVBTC AGM

Once again, our Annual General Meeting in June this year will be “virtual” – we will not meet in person. **For details, see President's Message.** While we hope this is not forever, last year's virtual AGM, our first ever, went smoothly.

### Vacant BVBTC Board Positions

As the AGM rolls around, some of our Board of Director positions are becoming vacant. We are looking for new blood (sweat and tears are also understood to be part of the package). Do you dream of filling one of these positions? Add your name to the hopper! Please contact Kelly Killoran at [beavervalleybruce-trail.org](http://beavervalleybruce-trail.org).

- President
- Vice President
- Treasurer
- Archivist
- Director of Communications and Publicity

### Give 'em the Boot!

Every year at the AGM, we announce the winner of the Keith Solomon Award, which actually comes in the form of a bronzed and mounted boot which belonged to one of the BTC's outstanding pioneers. The Keith Solomon Award goes to an **individual or group who has made a significant contribution to the improvement or preservation of the Bruce Trail in the Beaver Valley.** The BVBTC is accepting nominations until May 10, 2021 for candidates to receive our highest award. Please send your nomination to Kelly Killoran at [beavervalleybruce-trail.org](http://beavervalleybruce-trail.org). Be sure to add a brief supporting statement for your chosen candidate.



## “Secret” Waterfalls

by Stew Hilts

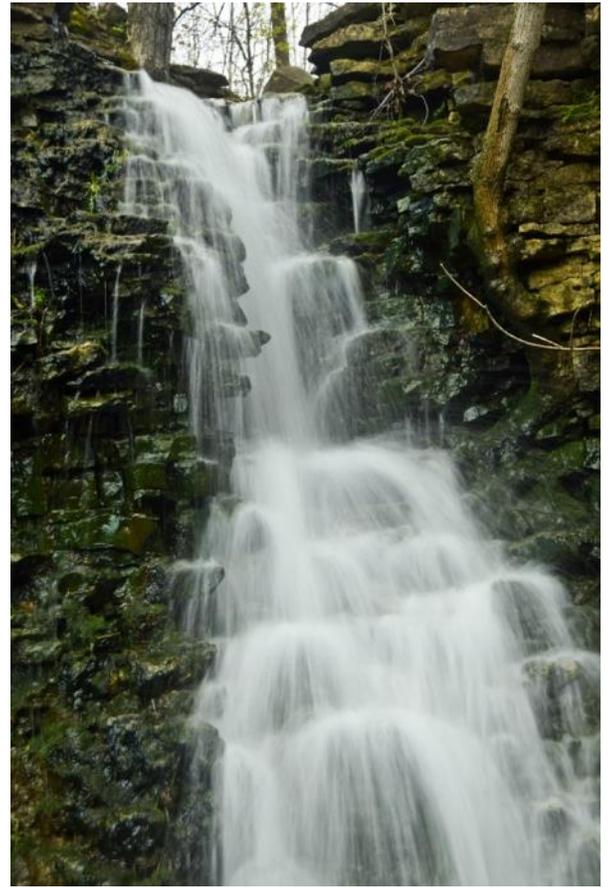
As a way of introducing the online version of my recent presentation on “Waterfalls of the Beaver Valley and Area” for the Thornbury Public Library, here’s a bit more about two of the “secret” waterfalls I talk about.

Did you know that you can see two “secret” waterfalls in the Beaver Valley? They’re “secret” in the sense that they don’t flow all the time. In the tiny stream above each falls there are sinkholes, and most of the year the water in the creek just drains down through the sinkhole, leaving the waterfall totally dry. But at least in the high water of early spring there’s too much water for the sinkholes, so there’s suddenly a waterfall.

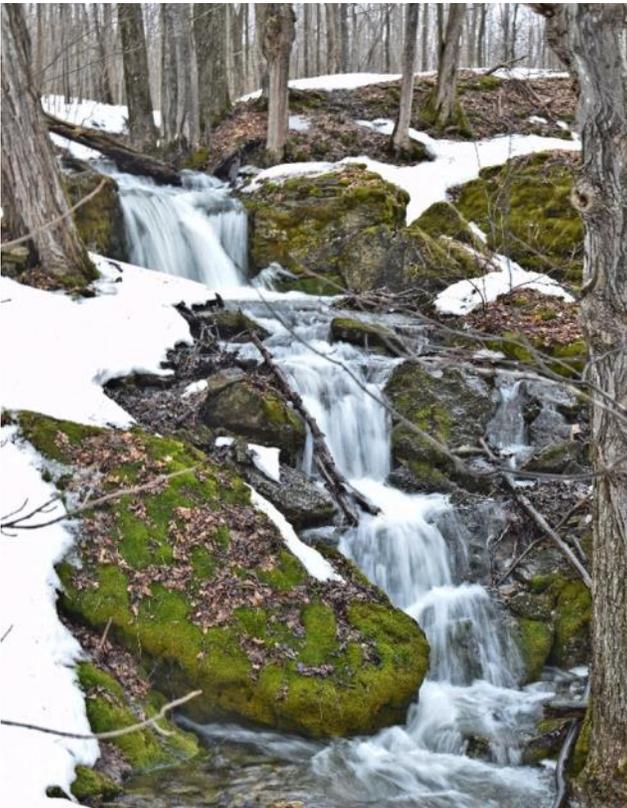
It might be just for a few days, or for several weeks depending on the rate at which the snow melts. These falls may also emerge into life after a very heavy rainstorm too, but I’ve never been there to see that.

The first, a falls I’ve seen described as Minniehill Falls, is just west of the 7th Line on the Bruce Trail, on GSCA property, approximately at km. 111.6. At dry times of the year you might not even recognize the rocky stream bed as you step across the limestone, but otherwise you may have to leap a small creek. The falls plunges 20 feet just to your right. The best view is by going past the creek and looking back.

Parking here is tricky, right at the crest of the large hill down the escarpment, but it is possible to pull a vehicle **totally** off the roadway on the east side just where the trail crosses.



*Minniehill Falls*



*Woodford Creek Falls*

The second “secret” waterfall is the Woodford Creek Falls, at approximately km. 42.8 of the Sydenham Trail Section, just outside the village of Woodford. As the Bruce Trail Guide notes, this waterfall “thunders over the edge for about one week of the year”. The rest of the year it disappears into the rock above, and emerges as a spring below the slope. If you approach from the west the trail is at the top of the slope. Over the dry creek it drops down to the level of the spring before heading east.

Approaching on the trail from the east the trail goes through an interesting crevice that is labelled as too narrow for those feeling claustrophobic! I didn’t find it so; other crevices just east of Owen Sound are much deeper and darker. Safe parking here is available both at the Community Centre in Woodford and on the St. Vincent-Sydenham Townline.

My presentation is now up on YouTube so you can watch this scintillating half-hour talk if you wish at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xkDwlWSdWsY>. You can also search for it at the “Blue Mountains Public Library” on YouTube, or search for “Waterfalls of the Beaver Valley”.

## History Corner

### “Won’t Come Back from Horseshoe Curve!”

by Andrew Camani

“Engine, Engine, Number 9, going down Chicago Line, If the train goes off the track, do you want your money back?” This round was once commonly used by children to determine who would be “it” in a game of tag. Change a few words of the round: “Engine, Engine 555, going down the Horseshoe Curve, if the train goes off the track, do you want your money back?” and we have the story of a real-life rail disaster on the Escarpment.

The Toronto Industrial Exhibition opened in 1879 as an annual fair to showcase industry and agriculture. The fair changed its name to the Canadian National Exhibition in 1912 to reflect the national scale of the exhibition. Railways were always looking for new ways to generate revenue, and providing transportation to entertainment sites was part of their marketing strategy. Rail lines offered special rates and added services to bring people to the Exhibition.

On September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1907, Engine 555 had spent the night in Owen Sound, where the crew had gone to use the turntable to turn the train around for the return trip to Toronto. The big Ten-Wheeler left Owen Sound the next morning, arriving in Shelburne nearly an hour and a half behind schedule. From this point on, the crew appear to have been trying to make up lost time. When they reached Orangeville, two men got off, saying they worried the train would be wrecked because of the speed it was going. It was standing room only in the five coaches and so two more coaches were added in Orangeville. The train had about 600 passengers on board. South of Caledon, the train started its descent of the Escarpment, known locally as Caledon Mountain, where it passed a “Slow Board” with a speed limit of 25 mph posted for the upcoming Horseshoe Curve. The curve was designed to allow locomotives to climb or descend the Niagara Escarpment safely, provided the train was going at the appropriate speed. The Helmsman claimed he never saw the sign.

That morning, as the passenger train entered the curve on the horseshoe, it left the tracks, overturning the engine, and destroying four of the wooden cars. Seven passengers were killed and 114 injured in the worst rail disaster ever in this part of the province. All the houses around the accident were turned into hospitals for the injured.

The Helmsman and the Conductor were arrested and charged with criminal negligence. At the trial, the Helmsman claimed to have been doing only 15 miles per hour. It turned out the Helmsman had only driven his first passenger train the day before the accident. Speculation as to the cause of the accident included excessive speed, hangover, and sleeping crew members, but in the end they were found not guilty.

However, the Canadian Pacific Railway was found guilty of not providing competent crew members, and they ended up paying off the survivors for years afterward.

This rail line has been abandoned since 1932, and the rails were removed for use in the Second World War. The ravine where the tracks crossed the Escarpment Sideroad near Heart Lake Road has been filled in to reduce the grade for cars on the road. On the north side of the road, the wooden crib that supports the embankment has been almost lost behind a new growth of vegetation. The rail corridor continues on the south side. Most of the ties have also been removed but there are still some ties visible where the line curved to head east toward the Horseshoe Curve. Standing on Horseshoe Hill Road, facing west, one can still make out the famous Horseshoe Curve in the field.

*Directions to the Great Horseshoe Curve:* In the Caledon Hills Section of the Bruce Trail, the trail follows Escarpment Sideroad to Horseshoe Hill Road (22.3 km). Turn right onto Horseshoe Hill Road and proceed approximately 500 metres – the Curve is on your right-hand side of the road.

If you would like to support Andrew’s new publication, “100 FORGOTTEN SITES – along the Bruce Trail” by receiving a copy of “100 HIKERS 100 HIKES,” please contact Andrew at [acamani50@gmail.com](mailto:acamani50@gmail.com).

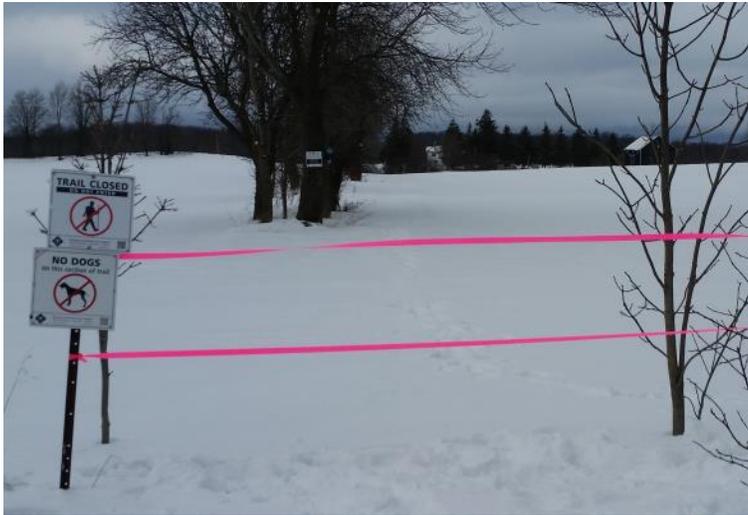
Do you have a historic tale or legend to tell of the Escarpment or the Bruce Trail? If so, we would love to share it! Send to the Editor, [info@beavervalleybruce-trail.org](mailto:info@beavervalleybruce-trail.org).



*Horseshoe Curve as it is now, filled in and smoothed out.*



**Trail Closed on account of Rain — a Rain of Bad Behaviour!**



The Bruce Trail passes through hundreds of parcels of private land. This is only possible because of the goodwill and generosity of the private landowners, who love their properties and want to share them, while still keeping them in their own fashion.

So it is heartbreaking when a landowner has to tell us that they can no longer allow the Trail to pass over their land (even temporarily), It is even more heartbreaking when they say the reason is that people have been abusing the privilege, violating landowners' reasonable requests to stay on the Trail, not wander around their property, park on their land, or in some cases, ignore any "no dogs" signage, let alone let the dogs run around off-leash.

The Beaver Valley Club asks all hikers, drivers, dog owners, and others to respect all signage, stick to the official trails – and imagine how they would feel if the roles were reversed.



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**"Pack your bags; We'll do the rest!"**

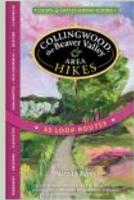
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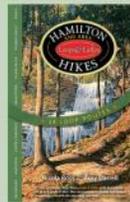
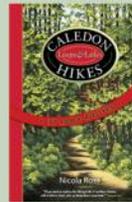
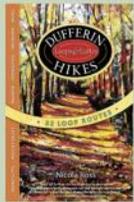
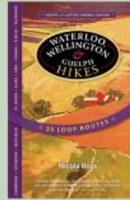


NEWEST RELEASE  
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Invasive Species

Garlic  
Mustard



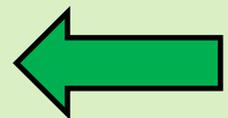
Garlic Mustard (GM)  
Picking Parties, Spring 2021

Our Club will once again be picking Garlic Mustard in the Beaver Valley this spring. Exactly when we will wrangle with this varmint is always hard to predict with much precision, though May is usually "prime time." For those who are concerned about work parties, rest assured that social distancing is very easy during GM parties as this invasive species spreads like wildfire, thus allowing us lots of room to stay distanced.

If you have not picked with us before but would like to try your hand, or if you are unsure if you are included on our "pickers list," please contact Joan Nuffield at [info@beavervalleybruce-trail.org](mailto:info@beavervalleybruce-trail.org), and she will include you in the email notices of upcoming parties.

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This is the result  
when we leave  
Garlic Mustard to  
its own devices.

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