



# Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network

## Annex

Niagara Escarpment Biosphere

2024 Self Study



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## Annex I List of Resource Links

<https://escarpment.org/>

- Niagara Escarpment Commission

<https://escarpment.org/inside-commission/about-our-commissioners/>

- Niagara Escarpment Commission members

<http://www.thegreatniagaraescarpment.ca>

- The Great Niagara Escarpment Website

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381215>

- Lima Action Plan

[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57e007452e69cf9a7af0a033/t/5b23dce1562fa7bac7ea095a/1529076973600/NAP\\_REPORT\\_EN\\_June+5\\_ACC.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57e007452e69cf9a7af0a033/t/5b23dce1562fa7bac7ea095a/1529076973600/NAP_REPORT_EN_June+5_ACC.pdf)

- Canada's Conservation Vision: A Report of the National Advisory Panel

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57e007452e69cf9a7af0a033/t/5c9cd18671c10bc304619547/1553781159734/Pathway-Report-Final-EN.pdf>

- One with Nature: A Renewed Approach to Land and Freshwater Conservation in Canada – A report of Canada's Federal Provincial and Territorial Departments Responsible for Parks, Protected Areas, Conservation, Wildlife and Biodiversity

[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57e007452e69cf9a7af0a033/t/5ab94aca6d2a7338ecb1d05e/1522092766605/PA234-ICE\\_Report\\_2018\\_Mar\\_22\\_web.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57e007452e69cf9a7af0a033/t/5ab94aca6d2a7338ecb1d05e/1522092766605/PA234-ICE_Report_2018_Mar_22_web.pdf)

- We Rise Together: Achieving Pathway to Canada Target 1 through the creation of Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas in the spirit and practice of reconciliation - The Indigenous Circle of Experts' Report and Recommendations

<http://forests-settled-urban-landscapes.org/>

- Forests in Settled & Urban Landscapes - Dr. Danijela Puric-Mladenovic

<https://myecoadventures.ca/>

- EcoAdventures

<https://capecrockerpark.com/activities/culture>

- Cape Croker Park - Anishinaabe Cultural Experiences

<https://theheartofontario.com/things-to-do/activities/outdoor/>

- Hamilton Halton Brant - Regional Tourism Association (RTO3)

<https://ero.ontario.ca/>

- Environmental Registry of Ontario

<https://escarpment.org/participationguide/>

- Niagara Escarpment Commission Participation Guide

<https://escarpment.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/2021-NEPOSS-Planning-Manual.pdf>

- NEPOSS Planning Manual 2021

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/aggregate-resources-study>

- The Supply and Demand Study of Aggregate Resources Supplying the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH)

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## **Annex III – Municipalities within the NEB Area**

### **NIAGARA REGION**

*(Seven local municipalities)*

Town of Grimsby

Town of Lincoln

City of Niagara Falls

Town of Niagara-On-The-Lake

Town of Pelham

City of St. Catharines

City of Thorold

### **CITY OF HAMILTON**

### **HALTON REGION**

*(Three local municipalities)*

City of Burlington

Town of Halton Hills

Town of Milton

### **REGION OF PEEL**

*(One local municipality)*

Town of Caledon

### **COUNTY OF GREY**

*(Six local municipalities)*

City of Owen Sound

Municipality of Medford

Township of Georgian Bluffs

Municipality of Grey Highlands

Township of Chatsworth

Town of The Blue Mountains

### **COUNTY OF SIMCOE**

*(One local municipality)*

Township of Clearview

### **COUNTY OF DUFFERIN**

*(Two local municipalities)*

Town of Mono

Township of Mulmur

### **BRUCE COUNTY**

*(Two local municipalities)*

Town of South Bruce Peninsula

Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula

### Annex III: Other Legislation, Entities, and Their Effect Within

Prepared by the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario p. 54

| Legislation  | Responsible Entity  | Example of Effect   |
|--|---|---|
| Planning Act   | Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing                           | Provides for land-use control by municipalities within the Plan Area where the Area of Development Control is not in place. Additionally, provides planning direction in the Provincial Policy Statement. |
| Greenbelt Act, 2005                                  | Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing                           | The Greenbelt Area includes the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area, and the Niagara Escarpment Plan provides the planning direction with some exceptions  |
| Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, 2006 | Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (Ontario Parks) | Management of sites to maintain ecological integrity such as Mono Cliffs Provincial Park  |
| Environmental Protection Act                         | Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks                 | Prohibits new or expanded waste disposal sites in the Plan Area   |
| Endangered Species Act, 2007                         | Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks                 | Approvals to impact regulated species at risk and their habitats  |
| Environmental Bill of Rights, 1993                   | Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks                 | Allows for public consultation on plan amendments posted by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry  |
| Conservation Authorities Act                         | Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry                          | Management of sites by conservation authorities   |
| Aggregate Resources Act                              | Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry                          | Approvals for pits and quarries   |
| Public Lands Act                                     | Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry                          | Management of provincial Crown lands  |
| Canada National Parks Act                            | Environment and Climate Change Canada; Parks Canada                 | Management of sites to maintain ecological integrity such as Bruce Peninsula National Park  |

## **NIAGARA ESCARPMENT BIOSPHERE NETWORK**

### **Newsletter Communication**

You are receiving this newsletter because you live in or near a World Biosphere Site, the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere to be precise.

Did you know scientific studies show regular contact and physical activity in natural environments such as the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere result in health benefits such as reduced negative physical symptoms including muscular pain and tension, and negative emotional symptoms such as depression, anxiety, and stress.

### **What is a Biosphere? Great question!**

A United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Biosphere is a term given to an area that meets certain sustainable development, biodiversity, and natural resource criteria. The goal of a UNESCO Biosphere is to promote biodiversity and conservation and help ensure the environmental, economic, and social sustainability of a region. The aim is to encourage better linkages between nature and human well-being. Biospheres, through their mandates, promote practical ways to conserve biological diversity, promote sustainable communities, encourage research and education, and preserve cultural heritage. Biospheres contain protected areas already designated by the federal, provincial, or local governments, but they have more areas that include communities. The designation is a recognition from UNESCO, not a legal entity.

### **What is the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere?**

In 1990, the Niagara Escarpment became a UNESCO designated Biosphere. The Niagara Escarpment is an exposed rocky ridge in North America that extends more than 1,050 km from southeastern Wisconsin, north through Manitoulin Island, south down the Bruce (Saugeen) Peninsula, east across the Niagara Peninsula, and then running east below Lake Ontario in New York State. It is a result of geological processes that began more than 400 million years ago. The geological patterns of the Niagara Escarpment and layering of rock types has created the stunning outcrops and cliff overhangs for which the escarpment is famous. With thousands of plant and animal species (over 2,500), the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere supports a greater number of both plant and animal species than any other ecosystem in Canada, making the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere one of the most ecologically diverse ecosystems in North America. In Ontario, the Biosphere goes from the Niagara region up to Tobermory in the Bruce (Saugeen) Peninsula. It contains, for example, the Bruce Trail, which is managed by the Bruce Trail Conservancy.

### **What can the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere do for me?**

The UNESCO Biosphere offers several benefits:

- Improved health and wellness;

- Increased conservation and ecosystem services such as cleaner air and water;
- Increased motivation for the protection and maintenance of biodiversity;
- Increased tourism and ecotourism opportunities;
- Consumption opportunities, including hunting and fishing;
- Flood control and climate change mitigation;
- Poverty alleviation through related employment;
- Promotes education, and research collaboration,
- Education programming opportunities;
- Boosts community morale and pride;
- Marketing and promotional opportunities;
- Increased funding opportunities.

Receiving a UNESCO Biosphere designation is an important accomplishment, however; designation requires long-term management commitments among site managers, local communities, and government.

### **What can I do for the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere?**

In 2022, the UNESCO Biosphere management transitioned from the Niagara Escarpment Commission to a grassroots, community level co-governance organization. The Niagara Escarpment Commission served as the Biosphere site administrator since its designation in 1990. This was no longer acceptable for the UNESCO designation. Therefore, its responsibility was transferred to this new co-governance entity known as the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network (NEBN). In March 2022, the NEBN was officially launched and incorporated under provincial regulations.

The NEBN is a network of networks where everyone can be involved. If you are interested, you can get involved in the work of the NEBN and become partner in any network. You can contribute to any activities that are protecting biodiversity, improving the health and sustainability of your community, exploring with researchers diverse aspects of the biosphere, or educate children in your community.

### **About the NEBN**

The Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network is a partnership of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, wherein Indigenous knowledge systems and western science are both seen as equal and respected. Scientific and traditional knowledge will be embraced through the concept of ethical space and two-eyed seeing as a means of bridging western science and Indigenous knowledge. Two-eyed seeing promotes using one eye to see the strengths of Indigenous knowledge while using the other eye to see the strengths of scientific knowledge, and then use both eyes together when fully “seeing” the world around us.

The ultimate goal of the NEBN is to create cross-cultural collaboration to implement restorative actions to improve ecological integrity, biodiversity, sustainability, and address climate change for the benefit of future generations.

<http://NEBNetwork.org/>  
[info@nebnetwork.org](mailto:info@nebnetwork.org)

# Annex V: Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve Indigenous Peoples Engagement Plan



Working Together for a Better World  
Engaging Indigenous Peoples in the Niagara Escarpment  
Biosphere Reserve



Plenty Canada  
266 Plenty Lane  
Lanark, Ontario  
K0G1K0  
613-278-2215

**Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve Indigenous Peoples Engagement Plan**

Working Together for a Better World  
Building Respectful Relationships with Indigenous Peoples in the Niagara Escarpment  
Biosphere Reserve (NEBR)

## **Background and Context**

There is an emerging need and tremendous opportunity for Indigenous peoples, community groups, and governments to bring their respective strengths together in collaborative efforts that work effectively across cultures and knowledge systems to address the most pressing issues of our time.

This opportunity to respond inclusively to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) and Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA's) as guided by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Lima Plan for MAB will not be easy.

The opportunity, hope and importance of the principles and goals of this Engagement Plan have a long history in the United Nations family, dating back to at least the United Nations-sponsored Earth Summit in 1992.

Twenty-three years later the UN General Assembly on September 25, 2015 approved Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda For Sustainable Development.

*As the preamble states: "This Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet, and prosperity." It includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 Targets. The Agenda is linked to the Lima Action Plan 2016-2025 for the Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR).*

The Lima Action Plan 2016-2025 was recently endorsed at the 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves (BR). Implementation is the responsibility of BRs, National Committees, Networks, and National UNESCO Commissions. It is also "strongly encouraged" that MAB National Committees and MAB networks prepare national strategies and actions plans. Periodic reviews of biosphere reserves serve to assess progress in meeting these action plans and failure to make progress could jeopardize standing as a member of the UNESCO WNBR.

The Vision Statement for the Lima Action Plan set forth values for building cooperation among peoples of the world:

*"Our vision is a world where people are conscious of their common future and interaction with our planet, and act collectively and responsibly to build thriving societies in harmony within the biosphere. The MAB Programme and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) serve this vision within and outside biosphere reserves."*

Stan Boychuk, President of the Canadian MAB Committee (CC-MAB), presented to the 4<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Biosphere Reserves in 2016. He included "two major areas that biosphere reserves and the Canadian network and member organizations of CCUNESCO need to address."

One of which is as follows:

*"Implementation of the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission released earlier this year, which outline steps to be implemented in order to mitigate the impacts of historical oppression of Indigenous peoples in Canada. The implementation of these Calls to Action is critical for achieving a new relationship with Indigenous peoples."*

CBRA made further commitments to Indigenous involvement in biosphere reserves while CCUNESCO has also established reconciliation as a key priority for the organization and its Man and Biosphere programme.

Collaborating with Indigenous peoples in BR was also discussed at the 2013 EuroMAB Network conference hosted by Frontenac Arch and several recommendations on how to better engage Indigenous people were made (these are included in the Appendix to the Plan). At the conference,



two Indigenous Advisory groups were set up, one for the EuroMAB Network and one for CBRA with the intention of strengthening cooperation among Indigenous peoples and mainstream societies to better succeed in meeting biosphere reserve objectives.

In 2014, Cecil Louis, an NEC Commissioner and NEBR representative to CBRA attended the 54th CCU AGM and post-AGM Clayquot BR excursion that focused on Indigenous collaboration. Mr. Louis made a number of suggestions regarding "initiatives to develop, maintain and enhance a mutually beneficial relationship with Aboriginal Peoples in the NEBR." The Commission endorsed the report on July 17, 2014 and followed up with a letter to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, which indicated their support for the suggestions contained in the report.

In addition to the UN direction and Canadian commitments to building cooperation among all peoples of the world, Ontario has recently made important commitments to truth and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, which should also be considered when developing an Indigenous Peoples Engagement Plan for the NEBR.

On June 2, 2015, Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne released the following statement (excerpts) in response to the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report summary:

*"The Commission has offered us an opportunity to renew our relationship with Aboriginal partners, and challenged us to renew our commitment to live together on this land based on principles of trust, mutual respect and shared benefits. Working with our First Nations, Métis and Inuit partners, it is a challenge the province of Ontario is grateful to accept. Today, I want to reaffirm the Province of Ontario's commitment to reconciliation, to supporting Survivors and to continuing to build trust with Aboriginal partners...Ontario is also working with Aboriginal partners to make everyone in the province aware of our rights and responsibilities as treaty people."*

On May 30, 2016, Premier Wynne announced Ontario's Commitment to Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, which included the following statements relevant to this initiative:

*"Indigenous peoples are the original occupants of this land we call Ontario and, over thousands of years, they developed distinct languages, cultures, economies and ways of life. This long history means that we're assembled in a sacred and traditional gathering place for many peoples of Turtle Island."*

*"Despite the promise of early treaties and the respectful, nation-to-nation partnerships they established, Indigenous Peoples became the target of colonial policies designed to exploit, assimilate and eradicate them. Based on racism, violence and deceit, these policies were devastatingly effective."*

*"...We truly need to learn from our past, which is why our programs and actions will be developed and evaluated in close partnership with our Indigenous communities -- openly and respectfully...It is a society- and government-wide journey."*

*"We are undoing the harm caused by our past, and building a society where future generations of Indigenous and non-Indigenous can walk together as equals -- living in peace and harmony on the land we now share."*

CCUNESCO Vice President, Danika Littlechild recently said in preparing to share a session titled Achieving ESD by Enhancing Partnerships between Indigenous Peoples and UNESCO Biosphere Reserves with EuroMAB educators in March of this year (2017) "it has to be more than sharing ATK (Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge) and western science, it has to be transformative." The opportunity presented in this Engagement Plan for careful but determined collaboration will require transformation

and we believe early steps have been taken by the NEC, as convener of the NEBR to achieve the goals of MAB through a transformative relationship building process.

The CCUNESCO opportunity and challenge is to sustain momentum for a better world by making reconciliation with Indigenous peoples a priority, not just at CCUNESCO headquarters but on the land at all Canadian Biosphere Reserves.

The NEBR has taken those first steps that many others in the Canadian Biosphere have yet to take. The NEBR initiative through various structures such as CBRA will be asked to share lessons learned as the Canadian family of Biospheres embarks on this journey together but the NEBR can count on support from the family too.

## **Engagement Plan Vision, Principles, Goals, and Actions**

### **Vision**

*"Our vision is a world where people are conscious of their common future and interaction with our planet, and act collectively and responsibly to build thriving societies in harmony within the biosphere. The MAB Programme and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) serve this vision within and outside biosphere reserves." [from Lima Action Plan 2016-2025]*

### **Principles**

These principles were adapted from the results of the workshop on collaborating with Indigenous peoples at the 2013 EuroMAB conference.

1. Seek to gain significant indigenous representation in governance and management of the NEBR.
2. Recognize the responsibility to engage indigenous communities located within the NEBR as rights-holders and hosts and recognize that the site is located within their territories.
3. Recognize indigenous/traditional knowledge as on par with other forms of expertise in decision-making. As a start, learn and use local concepts/language.
4. Base the collaboration approach on indigenous models, such as the Great Way of Peace: Respect, Equity, and Empowerment.
5. Maintain flexibility and patience. Give conversations the time they need, save space and time for cultural practices, understand that community and family matters are priorities, and understand community members are very busy.
6. Approach capacity-building as a two-way activity. What can you learn from one another?
7. Integrate and prioritize spiritual and emotional intelligence. Speak from your heart about your work, and about what you can do – and not do?
8. Indigenous community members and individuals have a long and rich history and relationship with the land. Their ways of knowing and their people have a lot to offer, and sharing this expertise will help to build bridges and increase our collective capacity.

### **Goals**

1. That indigenous peoples, community groups and governments work effectively across culture and knowledge systems to address the most pressing issues of our times.
2. That effective engagement leads to a new and enhanced relationship with Indigenous peoples.

3. That the enhanced relationships help contribute to a strengthened model for sustainable development and the sustainable management of biodiversity and natural resources and mitigation and adaptation to climate change.
4. That a new and enhanced relationship with Indigenous peoples will increase their participation in the NEBR and achieve the potential for collaborative governance and management.

### **Actions**

The Engagement Plan is divided into two phases with identified actions for each.

**Phase I** is the current contract with Plenty Canada (with the exception of a possible addition of an organizational meeting to prepare for the two outreach events).

**Phase II** includes recommended next steps to ensure effective relationships with Indigenous peoples are built and maintained through positive leadership, collaboration, and action on areas of mutual interest.

### **Phase I**

A) Conduct a preliminary assessment of active and viable interest among geographically vested Indigenous peoples and organizations involved in cross-cultural community activities (in relation to, or of value to, the Niagara Escarpment). Principals will be identified from the preliminary assessment to guide the development of a Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve (NEBR) Indigenous Peoples Engagement Plan.

First Nations and other Indigenous communities with a possible interest in the area of the NEBR include:

- Saugeen Ojibway Nation (Saugeen and Nawash)
  - Chippewas of Nawash (unceded)
  - Chippewas of Saugeen
- Mississaugas of the New Credit
- Six Nations of the Grand River
- Beausoliel First Nation (Christian Island)
- Georgina Bay Metis
- Great Lakes Metis Council
- Credit River Metis Council (Brampton)
- Grand River Metis
- Metis Nation in Thorold
- Huron Wendat

Other examples of organizations with a possible interest in the NEBR and engagement of Indigenous peoples include:

- Brock University – Dr. Vasseur UNESCO Chair Holder, Environmental Sustainability Research Centre and Michelle Elise Burnett, Indigenous Advisor to Brock University
- UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) in the NEBR
- Six Nations Youth Group
- NEBR Network participants (June 2015 and June 2016)
- Wood WORKS (promotes use of sustainable wood products in architecture - 2016 award)

winners that are located in the NEBR included the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation New Elementary School in Cape Croker, the Rock Garden Visitor Centre at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Hamilton, the First Ontario Performing Arts Centre in St. Catherine's)

- Friends of Laura Secord
- Landscape of Nations National Education Initiative
- Niagara Parks Commission
- Six Nations Polytechnic
- Trent University – Indigenous Environmental Studies Program
- The Red Hill Valley Archaeological Project
- Red Hill Valley Joint Stewardship Board (City of Hamilton and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy Chiefs Council)
- Sources of Knowledge Forum in Bruce Peninsula
- Bruce Peninsula Biosphere Association
- Bruce Peninsula National Park (Lenore Keeshig)
- Northern Bruce Peninsula Truth and Reconciliation Group

B) Prepare an information and orientation package for Indigenous peoples and organization representatives who express an interest. The package should include information about the NEBR, the NEBR link to the UNESCO Global Biosphere Reserve Network, and Indigenous communities' historical, cultural, and environmental perspectives.

Outreach, referrals, calls, and cultivation of interest will produce a list of identified participants. As part of the cultivation process (outreach, meetings, phone calls, events), points of convergence with Indigenous people own interests will be identified and documented. In addition, any action items resulting from this process will be documented for follow-up by the NEC as convener of the NEBR. These may include environmental concerns (including conservation initiatives and appropriate recreational uses of the land), cultural and/or heritage projects that either may be aspirational or already in progress, and even developmental plans that might add value to public access and the cultural interpretation of the Niagara Escarpment. Once this baseline of information is compiled, the two planned outreach events can be developed. The NEC's NEBR staff and the consultants may then determine the best design of the outreach events.

Necessary to this process will be the conveyance of NEBR characteristics, goals, and objectives. In other words, we will need to provide a certain level of information about the process to get people interested and involved. These potential participants will then be geographically and/or thematically divided for facilitation at two outreach events.

As noted in the excerpts from Premier Wynne's statements on Truth and Reconciliation, and commitments made for the MAB programme, this engagement plan identifies actions to increase the participation of Indigenous peoples in activities of the NEBR. Critical to the success of this initiative is involvement of leadership from NEC and its NEBR leads. The NEC as convener of the NEBR must be able to demonstrate leadership and commitment to engagement of Indigenous peoples. Also critical to the success of the initiative is that NEC's leadership and NEBR staff have the knowledge and capacity to work effectively with Indigenous peoples. To help build this knowledge and capacity and ensure the consultants and the NEC's NEBR leads have clearly articulated goals, roles, and responsibilities for the outreach events, it is recommended that a preliminary organizational meeting be held within the next 2 weeks with the NEC's NEBR leads and the consultants. While this preparatory workshop is currently not included in the contract, we believe this would serve as a value-added action to ensure the best possible Engagement Plan.

The workshop would also provide an opportunity to:

- Review and finalize the Engagement Plan;
- Consider use of NEC staff to lead a session that uses the EuroMAB Brand and Story Toolkit to help guide planning for engagement of Indigenous peoples (suggested at teleconference). The outcomes from this process can further inform the Engagement Plan;
- Review material that can be used for the outreach events (e.g., NEC background material from Laternel, presentations from 2015 and 2016 NEBR network events, Mr. Louis' report to the Commission, website, Larry McDermott's presentation at Lima etc.);
- Discuss and determine the most appropriate outreach events that are scheduled to be completed by April 30 and confirm roles and responsibilities of consultants and NEBR leads; and
- Discuss what is needed to sustain engagement with Indigenous peoples in the long term.

C) The two outreach events will enable the NEC, as convener of the NEBR, through the Indigenous consultants, to better understand opportunities for collaboration with Indigenous peoples and organizations. A summary of each outreach event will be prepared, with an emphasis being placed on identification of pragmatic ideas and themes that could serve to establish a workable plan of action with clearly defined goals, objectives, and outcomes, and that could unify programmatic purpose from the Niagara Peninsula north to the Bruce Peninsula. Intertwined with these engagements, as we mark the 150th Anniversary of Confederation, will be the themes of reconciliation and education. For example:

*1) How can the NEC express in tangible, responsible, and reciprocal ways the legacy of Indigenous heritage upon these lands?*

*2) What ideas and Indigenous assets are already expressed upon the Niagara Escarpment that can be utilized and linked together?*

*3) What values does the NEC have to offer in relation to First Nations? What values do First Nations have to offer the NEC? Identify shared values and establish a baseline of mutually accepted points of interest and aspiration.*

*4) What types of formal relationships can be developed between the NEC and Indigenous peoples and organizations that result in positive action in the NEBR toward common goals?*

D) NEC as convener of the NEBR should follow-up with Indigenous peoples contacts and organizations interested in engaging Indigenous peoples in the NEBR on any action items identified in the various discussions, face-to-face meetings, and outreach events being held in Phase 1 to ensure a constant flow of communication and ensure the Indigenous participants and other NEBR organizations remain engaged in the network.

E) Following the two outreach events it is suggested that a 3-year plan could be further developed that takes lessons learned from the 2016-17 engagement and planning process. Important contacts, communication instruments, and Indigenous ideas, questions and perhaps some preliminary projects, will have been identified for further action and follow-up.

## **Phase II**

Effective engagement and development of meaningful partnerships with Indigenous peoples takes time and sustained leadership from the NEC and NEBR. Phase II includes recommendations for next steps to ensure positive momentum is sustained, and that effective relationships with Indigenous peoples are built and maintained through positive leadership, action, and collaboration on areas of mutual interest in the NEBR.

The 3-year plan could include:

- The continued involvement of Indigenous consultants to help cultivate relationships between the NEBR and Indigenous peoples. Specific connection, cultivation, and education work could be done where possible with dedicated NEBR staff.
- Three to four outreach meetings in year one concentrating on geographical gaps and partnership development driven by interest from Indigenous peoples.
- At least one annual review of progress made in terms of the participation of Indigenous peoples, analysis of remaining obstacles, and identification of opportunities conducted with Indigenous consultants. The annual review should also look at CBRA commitments and the Lima Plan in relationship to Indigenous participation.
- The identification of priority recommendations and assessment of staff capacity flowing from the *Calls To Action*.
- The commitment to sharing through CC-MAB, CBRA, EuroMAB, CCUNESCO and respective Indigenous Circles lessons learned, best practices, and the connection of Indigenous peoples to other biosphere reserves. Connections could be made at least in part electronically.
- The development of annual budgets and funding strategies to properly deliver the plan and resultant activities. As much as possible, this should be done with the involvement of Indigenous participants.

## **Appendix A**

### **EUROMAB Network Conference 2013 – hosted by Frontenac Arch Theme: Engaging our Communities**

**Workshop:** Collaborating with Indigenous Peoples: A Dialogue to Rethink our Approach and to Learn from Existing Success and Challenges

#### **Recommendations:**

1. Establish a EuroMAB Indigenous Working Group - with the goal that all BRs apply the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
2. Add significant indigenous representation in BR governance and management as criteria for designation.
3. Recognize responsibility to engage indigenous communities as rights-holders and hosts of BRs; recognize that the sites are located within their territories.
4. Recognizing indigenous/traditional knowledge as equal base with other forms of expertise in decision-making. As a start, learn and use local concepts/language.
5. Base the collaboration approach on indigenous models, such as the Great Way of Peace: Respect, Equity, and Empowerment.
6. Maintain flexibility and patience. Give conversations the time they need, save space and time for cultural practices, understand that community and family matters are priorities, and understand community members are very busy.
7. Approach capacity-building as a two-way activity. What can you learn from one another?
8. Integrate and prioritize spiritual and emotional intelligence. Speak from your heart about your work, and about what you can do – and not do?
9. Hire community members; individuals that have a long and rich history and relationship with the land. Their resources and their people have a lot to offer, and help to build bridges.



# Bruce Trail CONSERVANCY

## Annex VI: Bruce Trail Land Securement Status (Credit: Bruce Trail Conservancy, 2024)

| Time Period | Number of Biosphere Properties Secured by the BTC | Property Value Secured | Ha Secured | Acres Secured | Bruce Trail Optimum Route Secured (km) |
|-------------|---|------------------------|------------|---------------|--|
| 2002        | 6   | 619,967                | 72         | 179           | 5.2                                    |
| 2003        | 9   | 731,619                | 95         | 234           | 4.5                                    |
| 2004        | 7   | 536,564                | 45         | 111           | 1.4                                    |
| 2005        | 16  | 1,542,864              | 126        | 312           | 6.2                                    |
| 2006        | 5   | 2,050,330              | 38         | 95            | 2.9                                    |
| 2007        | 9   | 959,375                | 133        | 329           | 3.5                                    |
| 2008        | 18  | 2,256,960              | 347        | 857           | 10.3                                   |
| 2009        | 18  | 1,735,788              | 228        | 564           | 7.6                                    |
| 2010        | 8   | 2,089,972              | 357        | 883           | 5.9                                    |
| 2011        | 7   | 1,713,440              | 160        | 396           | 3.5                                    |
| 2012        | 10  | 2,301,940              | 216        | 533           | 6.1                                    |
| 2013        | 10  | 1,449,500              | 228        | 563           | 5.6                                    |
| 2014        | 11  | 733,786                | 49         | 120           | 3.9                                    |
| 2015        | 12  | 1,154,427              | 105        | 259           | 2.3                                    |
| 2016        | 11  | 1,224,265              | 118        | 291           | 3.3                                    |
| 2017        | 13  | 2,817,845              | 401        | 990           | 8.8                                    |
| 2018        | 15  | 2,803,316              | 144        | 357           | 5.5                                    |
| 2019        | 18  | 7,606,750              | 480        | 1187          | 14.9                                   |
| 2020        | 12  | 4,206,501              | 221        | 545           | 6.4                                    |
| 2021        | 16  | 9,898,000              | 416        | 1027          | 6.4                                    |
| 2022        | 16  | 9,634,000              | 415        | 1025          | 12.1                                   |
| 2023        | 6   | 4,139,690              | 171        | 423           | 3.6                                    |

indicates data compiled in 2011

indicates data compiled in 2024

Author: Scott Langley Source: GIS extraction Date: 01-09-2024





**Annex VII: Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy Land Securement Summary (2013 to 2023)**

| Year | Properties Protected   | Area (ac) |
|------|--|-----------|
| 2013 | <p><b>Long Swamp Mills</b> - Over 84 acres. Located in Owen Sound.</p> <p><b>CAW</b> - The nature preserve is over 105 acres and located opposite MacGregor Point Provincial Park.</p>   | 189       |
| 2014 | <p><b>Kendall</b> - This property consists of two parcels at approximately 7 acres total. It lies just south east of Belfountain, Ontario. The combination of mature hardwoods, cedar forest and cliff edge provides important sources of food, shelter, breeding habitat and travel corridors for a wide variety of wildlife.</p> <p><b>Thornton</b> - Almost 75 acres located in Grey County, Durham</p> <p><b>Bingaman</b> - This 27 acre property is along the Escarpment with spectacular escarpment views. The southern part of the property features the Green Bush Savannah with grasslands and Burr Oaks. Located in Honora, a town of Northeastern Manitoulin and the Islands.</p> | 109       |
| 2015 | <p><b>Harkins Shore</b>- Top end of Bruce Peninsula Integrates with earlier Alvar Bay site, as well as Nature Conservancy of Canada sites.</p> <p><b>Skeoch</b> - It is almost 70 acres and includes part of the Bruce Trail. A headwaters tributary of the Beaver River rises within one kilometer of the Property and flows west towards the Beaver valley through the village of Red Wing. The mature hardwoods, cedar forests and cliff face vegetation, plus permanent streams provide important habitat for a wide variety of wildlife.</p>  | 70        |
| 2016 | <p><b>Miller</b> - Grey County, Kemble, 254 acres. The nature preserve features a varied landscape of flat to gently undulating terrain, rising to about 235 meters above sea level, and hosts a mix of habitats including hardwood forests, wetlands, and swamps. It is ecologically significant, providing vital habitat for a wide variety of wildlife, including several species at risk such as the Black Tern and Northern Map Turtle. The preserve includes the Mountain Lake Skinner Marsh Wetland Complex, a Provincially Significant Wetland, and is surrounded by other protected areas.</p>  | 254       |

| Year | Properties Protected   | Area (ac) |
|------|--|-----------|
| 2017 | <p><b>Silver</b> - Almost 120 acres. It is a mix of reforested land and natural habitats, is located along the west side of 7th Line and includes a maple-beech forest and part of the Wodehouse Marsh Wetland. Its gently rolling terrain, rising to 441 meters above sea level, provides crucial habitat for diverse wildlife, including the COSEWIC-Special Concern Snapping Turtle and other at-risk species like the Wood Thrush.</p>   | 120       |
| 2018 | <p><b>Francis Lake</b> - Part of a small lake and wetland perched above escarpment.</p> <p><b>Mapleton</b> - Mapleton is a 50 acre nature preserve situated southwest of Arthur. It is part of a small network of forested land in an agriculture-dominated landscape in the Township of Mapleton. This parcel features a conifer plantation, diverse wetlands, a deciduous forest area, and two large ponds, providing habitat for a variety of plants and animals, including species like the Red-winged Black Bird and Green Frog. Significant ecological aspects of the property include its role in stabilizing a stream and a portion of the Ritch Tract Swamp Provincially Significant Wetland</p>  | 50        |
| 2019 | <p><b>Willisville Mountain</b> - This 235 acre preserve borders the beautiful Heaven's Gate preserve, extending the protection of this region for flora, fauna and hikers alike. This vital area protects more of the 3.5 billion-year-old silica and quartz La Cloche Mountains, formerly as high as the Rockies. In addition to encompassing the whole of Willisville Mountain, this property also protects two wetlands and crucial habitats for the 12 species at risk in the area. A 3km loop trail leads visitors up to the top of the mountain for stunning views and then back down through cool hemlock forest.</p> <p><b>Orlowski</b> - The Orlowski Nature Preserve is 98 acres of wetland, forest and grassland habitats located in Wiarton, Ontario. A large proportion of the preserve is covered by Rankin River Wetland (PSW). The wetland complex provides shelter for reptiles, birds and mammals such as painted and snapping turtles, waterfowl, sandhill cranes and beavers. The forested areas provide a safe space for pileated woodpeckers, bobolinks, flying squirrels, deer and black bears. The grasslands provide important habitat for pollinating invertebrates.</p> | 442       |
| 2020 | <p><b>Phillips Kolapore</b> - Phillips Kolapore Nature Preserve, located near Grey County Road 2 and Osprey The Blue Mountains Townline, is a diverse 102-acre area consisting of forest, wetlands, and residential land. The forested region, primarily made up of hardwoods like Sugar Maple and Black Cherry, accounts for about 60 acres, supporting a variety of wildlife including deer and the Black-throated Green Warbler.</p>  | 180       |

| Year | Properties Protected   | Area (ac) |
|------|--|-----------|
|      | <p><b>Boyd Lake</b> - Boyd Lake Nature Preserve covers over 78 acres within the Saugeen River Watershed, featuring wetlands and mixed forests. This area supports diverse wildlife, including species like the Snapping Turtle. It contributes to the region's ecological health by enhancing forest cover, wetland buffers, and groundwater quality.</p>  |           |
| 2021 | <p><b>Heaven's Gate</b> - The preservation of 1900 acres, Kitchitwaa Shkwaandem protects this culturally and ecologically significant land from development and bridges the gap between LaCloche Provincial Reserve and Killarney Provincial Park. The land is highly biodiverse, with over 12 species at risk calling it home, three lakes and two mountains within its borders along ancient Canadian Shield landscape. Species found here include Bald and Golden Eagles, River Otters, Blanding's Turtles and Algonquin Wolves.</p> <p><b>Michael's Bay</b> - This 486-acre site includes land north of Manitou River Road, part of a pond, the land on both sides of 2 km of Manitou River, and an easterly strip that connects with 600 m of Michael's Bay shoreline which includes Beach Ridges. The latter is a very singular topography in Manitoulin Island. It joins Blue Jay Creek Park, and includes both sides of Manitou River.</p> <p><b>Trout Hollow</b> - 160 acres on the Bighead River. Canadian home of John Muir, a founder of the US National Parks system and the Sierra Club. The site also links a municipal park to a regional conservation area to make a larger site with an 11 km hiking and cross country ski trail on both sides of the river.</p> | 2,546     |
| 2022 | <p><b>Barrie Island</b> - The preserve consists of more than 350 acres of Cultural Meadows, Open Tallgrass Prairie, Deciduous Forest and Mixed Forest located on the north-east corner of Barrie Island. An escarpment stretches around the northeastern corner of the property continuing in both directions and separating the tablelands from the lowland mixed forest that grows out to the shoreline. A 6 km loop trail gives you a tour of both the top and bottom of the escarpment plus an opportunity for a worthwhile side trip to Blackstock Point.</p> <p><b>Wolsey Lake</b> - This 594-acre preserve on the shore of Lake Wolsey is a true haven for wildlife and hikers alike. Seven kilometres of trail travel through beautiful forest and moss-laden mazes of rocks and crevices as it winds over the escarpment, then down the other side to arrive at a sandy beach and a view of Lake Wolsey and beyond to the North Channel of Lake Huron.</p> <p><b>Nottawasaga</b> - This wilderness preserve is 143.53 acres located in Township of Essa, County of Simcoe. The mixed forest and treed swamp provide important habitat for interior birds such as Bank Swallow and Wood Thrush.</p>  | 1,087     |

| Year | Properties Protected   | Area (ac)    |
|------|--|--------------|
| 2023 | <p><b>Dominion Bay</b> - 100 acre nature preserve on Manitoulin Island, a region characterized by a richness of globally significant species and rare alvar habitat. This nature preserve protects around 500m of Lake Huron shoreline made up of shelf-limestone and exposed rocky bedrock.</p> <p><b>Ligeti</b> - 61.82 acres of Niagara Escarpment in Keppel, in the traditional territory of the Saugeen Ojibwe Nation. The preserve is part of the provincially significant kemble wetland area and scientific interest and is also considered a core area of the county's natural heritage system providing habitat for red headed woodpecker and snapping turtles.</p> <p><b>Grimsby Bench</b> - This preserve in the town of Grimsby protects 43.5 acres of Carolinian habitat, and also over 200m of Bruce Trail for recreational hiking.</p> <p><b>Nineteen Lake</b> - One of our newest nature preserves protects over 288 acres of land on western Manitoulin, featuring cedar and hardwood forest stands, alvar and extensive shoreline on Nineteen Lake.</p> | 493          |
|      | <b>Total Acres Protected (approximately)</b>   | <b>5,540</b> |



Niagara  
Escarpment  
Biosphere  
Network

<http://nebnetwork.org/>

## Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network (NEBN) Le Réseau de la biosphère de l'escarpement de la Niagara (RBEN)

### Principles of Engagement / Vision Statement

The Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network has been co-developed with Indigenous peoples so people from all four directions can work together on Turtle Island in balance in a good way with a good heart. We work toward reconciliation through using ethical space and sharing knowledge that helps us protect the land, water, air, and spirit of G'chi Bimadinaa (in Anishinaabemowin, The Great Cliff That Runs Along).

Our organization works in the context of *Canada's Conservation Vision: A Report of the National Advisory Panel* that "embraces Indigenous world views that acknowledge we are one species among many that share the Earth with the rest of life, achieves our collective conservation goals within a framework of reconciliation and the creation of ethical space, and affirms that a core strategy for conserving biological diversity is an interconnected network of protected areas and OECMs (Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures)."

#### *Dream*

*The Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network has been established as a community-led, grassroots organization that has exceeded the criteria and standards required by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). <https://www.unesco.org/en/mab/wnbr/about>*

#### *Vision*

*For all to live in a healthy environment in the lands connected by the Niagara Escarpment where we work together to conserve and protect the land, water and air for diverse resilient ecosystems and the sustainability of our communities.*

#### *Belief*

*Though humans have caused a biodiversity and climate crisis, we believe that we have a responsibility, as well as the potential, to make things better together and with equity — for the land, the air and the water, for all living beings, for all future generations — and to engage in co-development of these solutions with Indigenous Peoples throughout the Niagara Escarpment.*

#### *Goal*

*To build and connect networks of individuals and groups in communities across the Niagara Escarpment by providing forums to share successes and promote learning that support good practices for conservation and supporting a low-carbon, diverse, sustainable, resilient and just future for all.*

**Adopted by NEBN Board of Directors, 14 September 2023**



# Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network

## Annex IX: Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network Communications Plan

The communications plan for the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network involves outlining strategies to effectively convey the organization's message, engage stakeholders, and achieve its engagement goals. The primary objectives include fostering internal collaboration, growing and maintaining external stakeholder relationships, and promoting a positive organizational image.

### 1. Executive Summary:

The Niagara Escarpment Biosphere has transitioned to a non-governmental, not-for-profit organization. The purpose of this transition was to better connect the community and stakeholders with the biosphere and create a sense of shared responsibility among these groups. Among the Biosphere's many objectives, education remains one of the most prioritized efforts; to engage with the public and promote awareness of ecology and environmental issues along the Niagara Escarpment. To further the goals of the Biosphere, engagement with the public regarding advocacy and education on conservation efforts and sustainable development has been identified as a priority.

### 2. Situation Analysis:

The lands that comprise the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere traverse from Lake Ontario all the way to the tip of the Bruce (Saugeen) Peninsula, extending a total of 725+km (UNESCO, 2018). As such, there are a wide variety of relevant audiences and stakeholders to consider that reside and work in the Biosphere or surrounding areas.

### 3. Goals and Objectives:

The Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network was established to support the management of the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere as a community-led, grassroots organization that will work to meet the criteria and standards required by United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Significant progress is underway to ensure the sustainability of the UNESCO designated Niagara Escarpment Biosphere. Supported by Environment and Climate Change Canada, the Indigenous

non-governmental organization Plenty Canada is partnering, nurturing, and assisting in the development of the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network.

The goal is to increase network connections by forming relations with organizations and individuals across all sectors and audiences that have an interest in sustaining the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere.

Objectives include the conservation and protection of natural resources, forests, wildlife, plants, and biodiversity within the Niagara Escarpment biosphere through the communication of Indigenous and Western knowledge, and the nurturing of empathic traditions. These include the philosophy of Two-Eyed Seeing, to expand sources of biological knowledge and ecological insights. The combination of Indigenous and Western knowledge systems is important for the sustainability of the biosphere's ecosystems. It is also important for community-based conservation by connecting human values with conservation values.

#### **4. Target Audiences:**

Looking specifically at communication and partnership opportunities available to further education and community interaction with the Biosphere, eight sectors were identified. Over time and as resources increase, we will tailor messages and communication channels to meet the needs and preferences of each audience. These include:

- Outdoor Education Organizations
- Regional Municipalities and Governments
- Conservation Authorities
- Independent Businesses, Corporations, and Associations
- Non-governmental Organizations
- Government Organizations, Commissions and Agencies
- Colleges and Universities
- Indigenous Nations and Groups

The Niagara Escarpment Biosphere provides a variety of key educational opportunities with its unique ecological characteristics and diverse environments (Woronchak, et al., 2020). The goal of the organization is to formulate partnerships with various stakeholders to educate the public and broader community on sustainable development and conservation efforts. The Biosphere holds the opportunity for both in-situ and ex-situ educational activities; many of which align with stakeholder objectives. Educational opportunities include:

- Environmental and Social Research
- Data Collection
- Conservation Initiatives and Habitat Integrity
- Historical and Current Heritage of Local Indigenous Nations and Groups
- Community Outreach
- Youth Engagement

#### **5. Key Messages:**

Through the support and engagement of stakeholders, the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network will not only provide educational activities for such groups but also, stress the importance of sustaining the biosphere and the vast biodiversity that lives within it. The Niagara Escarpment Biosphere is currently the largest stretch of forested land that remains in Ontario including two key biomes (Woronchak, et al., 2020). Despite the Biosphere's ecological importance, it continues to face many anthropogenic threats. Efforts to sustain the Biosphere are vital in preserving its biological diversity and relies on stakeholder support.

## **6. Communication Channels:**

Plan incorporates appropriate communication channels for reaching each target audiences (e.g., social media, email newsletters, press releases, website content, public programming events).

## **7. Content Calendar:**

A newsletter is sent out two to three times a year through MailChimp. Newsletter articles are composed through interactions with network associates, allowing there to be consistent engagement with NEBN partners. These newsletter articles are then posted on the NEBN website through its news blog. Through MailChimp, the newsletter is also posted through social media channels. Important statements are also posted through MailChimp when they occur, as well as Facebook and Instagram when they need to be promoted.

## **8. Crisis Communication Plan:**

It is vital for the NEBN to be vigilant and responsive to urgent issues, such as the Bill 23 controversy where it was essential that perspectives from conservation organizations be heard. When such circumstances arise, key spokespeople, messaging strategies, and communication channels are identified to address the crises effectively.

## **9. Measurement and Evaluation:**

MailChimp and social media sites provide data and insights regarding audience engagement. These will help to determine the audience's interest, age, and other demographics. Currently, the audience engagement through MailChimp is aged 45+, whereas the socials have a younger audience. Responses to the questionnaire will also apply to evaluating engagement.

## **10. Budget:**

Working from ECCC Plenty Canada budget accordingly. Resources are allocated for communication activities, including staff time, design, printing, and digital marketing. Spending is prioritized based on the most effective channels for reaching the target audiences.

## **11. Team Roles and Responsibilities:**

Norm Ragetlie – Co-chair

Charlene Winger Jones – Co-chair



Liette Vasseur – Director at large  
Caley Doran – Board Member  
Josh Eshkawkogan – Board Member  
Mark Zelinski – Board Member  
Victoria Serda – Board Member  
Bradley May – Outgoing Board Member  
Larry McDermott – Board Member  
Jeff Barrett – Board Member  
Leslie Adams – Board Member  
Kerry Kennedy – Board Member  
Tim Johnson – Board Member

Communications Outreach and Engagement Committee  
Mark Zelinski (Niagara Escarpment book and Manitoulin outreach)  
Tim Johnson  
Victoria Serda  
Walter Sendzik (municipal outreach and resolutions)  
Amanda Harwood – Support  
Jocelyn Baker – Support

Tasha Gunasinghe – Support  
Emily Morris – Support  
Jessica Boateng - Support

## **12. Collaboration with Partners:**

All board members and staff working on the NEBN regularly identify opportunities for collaboration with other organizations, influencers, or community partners to amplify the NEBN message. See engagement protocols established for the board.

## **13. Feedback Mechanisms:**

Responses from stakeholders and partners will be documented, as will statistical data provided by NEBN survey. Engagement with stakeholders and partners also continues through the newsletters as a core principle of the organization's communication strategy.

## **14. Adaptation and Flexibility:**

Remain flexible and adapt the communications plan based on changing circumstances, feedback, and the evolving needs of the organization.

## **Conclusion:**

The Communications Plan serves as a dynamic framework for optimizing communication strategies. By addressing the specific needs of diverse audiences through targeted messaging and leveraging appropriate channels, the organization aims to build strong relationships, enhance its reputation, and

achieve strategic objectives. Regular assessment and adaptation of the plan will ensure its ongoing relevance and effectiveness. Regularly review and updates to the communications plan ensures its relevance and effectiveness in achieving the non-profit organization's goals.



<http://nebnetwork.org/>

**Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network (NEBN)**  
**Le Réseau de la biosphère de l'escarpement de la Niagara (RBEN)**

## **Sustaining the Fire of the NEBN Together**

### **Co-Governance Principles for an Inclusive and Successful NEBN Board**

- Board operates from a core place of Ethical Space and Two-Eyed Seeing
- All Board Members have the necessary training for creating a shared path
- Each Board Member is fully committed to Reconciliation
- Power of Ceremony
  - Smudging or other suitable Ceremony will start and close all Board meetings
- Chair and Co-Chair govern as equals and are selected to represent Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives
- Both Chairs act as one voice representing NEBN to external partners such as CBRA, and attend together, whenever possible
- A balance of Indigenous and non-Indigenous voices is achieved, including participation of Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee First Nations
- Board Meetings are a time for Sharing, Listening, Dialogue and Decision-making with sufficient time allocated to complete this cycle
- Board Members are given the opportunity to Immerse themselves in the beauty of the Biosphere and invite guests to meetings for sharing Biosphere experiences

Adopted by the NEBN Board of Directors 14 September 2023



# NIAGARA PARKS

## Annex XI : Indigenous Niagara Heritage and Legacy Tour

### Start

The tour begins at the Fort George Parking lot, with introductions by Tim Johnson and greetings by guest host Alyssa General.

### **Indian Council House**

In 1755, at a time when the “French and Indian War” was heating up, the British Indian Department was formed as the sole Crown agent for establishing and maintaining alliances with Indigenous nations. Meetings between the Department and Indigenous leaders from many nations were held at Fort George and followed Indigenous diplomatic protocols. The primary function of the Department was the forging and maintaining of alliances, essential to the successful defense of British North America in the War of 1812.

### **Fort George**

When the American Revolution ended in 1783 by the terms of the *Treaty of Paris*, Fort Niagara was now in US territory but the British continued to occupy it because the Americans did not fulfill their treaty obligations. By the terms of the *Jay Treaty*, the British handed over Fort Niagara to the Americans in 1796. Many of their Indigenous allies expressed concern that the British surrendered it without a fight.

### **Laura Secord Homestead**

The life of Laura Secord, one of Canada’s most famous heroines, contained several intersections with Indigenous Peoples and events. Her father, Thomas Ingersoll, once a patriot in the American Revolution, became offended by the persecution of Loyalists in Massachusetts following the war. In 1793, he met Mohawk leader Joseph Brant, who recommended he move his family to Upper Canada, where the Crown was encouraging settlement. Laura married James Secord and they built a house and store in Queenston. During an early engagement in the War of 1812, James was wounded in the Battle of Queenston Heights on October 13, 1812, at which Indigenous allies helped to repel the invading Americans and secure victory.

Laura is best known for her perilous 32-kilometre journey to warn the British and their allies of an imminent American attack during the following year of the war. On her journey, she encountered a contingent of Mohawk warriors, who then escorted her the rest of the way to provide her information to Lieutenant James FitzGibbon. The attack she warned about

happened two days later and is known as the Battle of Beaver Dams. Unknown to most Canadians, however, the battle was fought and won by some 300 Kahnawake Mohawk warriors.

### **Queenston Heights Park / Landscape of Nations Commemorative Memorial**

Powerful experiences are gained from the creation of spaces and forms that foster emotional and intellectual impulses. *Landscape of Nations* is a place of experience that not only communicates a singular event in the War of 1812, but also anchors that event in the context of history and culture of the Six Nations and Native allies. The central meandering pathway is a metaphor for the passage of time as well as the values of peace and mutual respect.

Two primary figures of the war, John Norton and John Brant, war captains from the Six Nations, serve as sentries to the entrance of the pathway leading to the longhouse (the traditional architectural structure of the Six Nations people). John Norton was adopted by the Mohawk Nation and was appointed to be a diplomat and war chief for that nation in 1799. John Brant was the son of the famous Mohawk leader Joseph Brant and he became, along with Norton, a leader of Haudenosaunee forces during the War of 1812.

### **Battle of Queenston Heights, October 13, 1812**

Norton's men, later joined by the Lincoln Militia (including the Coloured Corps), prevented the Americans from organizing on the Heights and kept them pinned down. Additional New York militia refused to cross the river at Lewiston to reinforce their comrades on the Heights. The skirmishing by Norton, Brant, and their men gave the British reinforcements enough time to follow the same path taken earlier by the Haudenosaunee to the top of the Heights where they were joined by the fighters from Chippawa.

### **Natural Environment of the Niagara Escarpment**

The Niagara Escarpment is the largest contiguous stretch of primarily forested land in south-central Ontario, stretching some 725 kilometers from Niagara in the south to Tobermory on the Saugeen or Bruce Peninsula in the north. It has the greatest topographic variability in southern Ontario, with elevations of up to 510 meters and has unique habitats that include: Great Lakes coastlines, cliff edges, talus slopes, wetlands, woodlands, limestone alvar pavements, oak savannas, conifer swamps, and others.

### **Indian Trails of Niagara - Indigenous Byways to Regional Highways**

For thousands of years Indigenous people have hunted in the Niagara area and have fished the shores of Lake Ontario, Lake Erie, or the Niagara River and their tributaries. Pathways were developed following animal trails in pursuit of game or to link the villages that developed in the Peninsula. Trade was an important aspect of life long before Europeans arrived on the scene with hunters exchanging meat and pelts and farmers exchanging corn, beans, squash, and tobacco, while fishers exchanged their catch with other traders who brought wampum from the East Coast, pipestone from present day Oklahoma, copper from north of Lake Superior, and a variety of goods from all over eastern North America.

### **Botanical Gardens / Indigenous Medicinal Plants**

Revel in nature's most beautiful creations and discover the art of horticulture at Niagara Parks' Botanical Gardens. Featuring ninety-nine acres of award-winning landscapes complemented by vibrant seasonal blooms and lush curated and natural gardens, including displays of Indigenous plants from the Niagara area and throughout North America, visitors learn about the Carolinian forests, grasslands, and meadows that shaped Indigenous life in the region. A subsequent stop at **Niagara Glen** for view and further explanation of geological and Indigenous history.

### **En route, story of Devil's Hole Massacre**

The Niagara River corridor had long been under the jurisdiction of the Seneca Nation, "Keepers of the Western Door," of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. By the mid 1700s however, they became disconcerted seeing their authority usurped along the portage routes that moved trade goods and people from the lower Niagara River to the upper River above Niagara Falls, and vice versa. As many as 300 Seneca men who had worked as porters on the trail had been displaced by Europeans. Discontent rose, and on September 14, 1763, a large force of Seneca warriors ambushed a wagon train and its armed escort as it passed by Devil's Hole along the Niagara Escarpment. Two companies of the British 80<sup>th</sup> Regiment heard of the attack and rushed off to rescue the wagon train. Seneca warriors were waiting and attacked the reinforcements, killing more than 80 British soldiers. Seneca warrior *Dekanandi* told Sir William Johnson that only one warrior was wounded. In 1764, the Treaty of Niagara served to re-establish peace between the British and some two dozen Indigenous nations.

### **Niagara Falls**

Indigenous observation and understanding of the power of the Falls extends back 12,500 years. Indigenous Peoples witnessed the origins of the Falls near present day Queenston, following its erosion to its current location over the course of some 500 generations.

In the epic migration story of the Anishinaabek people, their second major stopping place was said to be Niagara Falls, which they appropriately named Thundering Waters. In the traditional Seneca story of the Maid of the Mist, Thunder Beings who lived behind the Falls were endowed with great kinetic energy, power that was used to heal a young, distressed woman.

### **Table Rock Exhibit / Optional Restaurant and Thanksgiving Meal**

#### **Maid of the Mist and the Thunder Beings**

Throughout the millennia over which Indigenous Peoples have inhabited the Niagara region, a number of cultural stories emerged that referenced Niagara Falls, the Niagara River, the Great Lakes, and the protective forces and energies that made human life possible. One such story is that of the Maid of the Mist and the Thunder Beings, which was passed on to a group of Indigenous researchers by Tonawanda Seneca Nation Chief Corbett Sundown in 1981.

The Maid of the Mist and the Thunder Beings is the tale of a young woman who fell into despair after being infected by an evil spirit, leading her to paddle her canoe over Niagara Falls. Instead

of crashing over the cataract, she landed safely at the bottom, where the Thunder Beings, a group of spiritual elders whose role was to protect the people, led her behind the Falls.

The Thunder Beings held a healing ceremony, and the young woman became extremely powerful, endowed with kinetic energy. Once she was fully healed, she returned to her village where she raised a beautiful family. The Thunder Beings fulfilled their obligation to protect the people, much as they do today through the kinetic energy of Niagara Falls providing power for families in Canada and the United States.

### **The Art**

*Maid of the Mist and the Thunder Beings*, an oil on canvas painting created by Oren Lyons in 1981, was commissioned to hang in the museum of the Native American Center for the Living Arts (Niagara Falls, New York). It was returned to the artist when the Center closed in the 1990s, purchased from the artist by Tom Worrell, founder and owner of Worrell Water Technologies, who then donated it to the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian in 2011. It has been reproduced for display here with the permission of the artist and the Smithsonian.

### **Thanksgiving Meal**

Guests can also sit down to a stunning view of Niagara Falls at the renowned Table Rock Restaurant for dinner prepared by its world class chef. The traditional Thanksgiving meal that everyone enjoys in North America is predominantly of Indigenous foods.

- Domestic turkeys come from the wild turkey (*meleagris gallopavo*), a species that is native only to the Americas.
- The potato is native to the Peruvian-Bolivian Andes. It was cultivated in South America by the Inca as early as 1,800 years ago. The Inca were masters of plant propagation and developed thousands of varieties of potatoes.
- Corn, which requires human intervention, is a plant that does not exist naturally in the wild. It can only survive if planted and protected by humans. Corn was first domesticated by Indigenous Peoples in southern Mexico some 10,000 years ago and is derived from *teosinte*, a wild grass.
- The cranberry (genus *Vaccinium*) is native to the swamps and bogs of northeastern North America. It belongs to the Heath, or Heather family (*Ericaceae*), which is a very widespread family of about 3,500 species.
- Pumpkins originated in North America some 9,000 years ago. The oldest seeds were found in Mexico and date back to 7,000 to 5,550 B.C. As a squash, it was an important food staple for Indigenous Peoples.

### **End**

Return to Niagara-on-the-Lake, presentation on Truth and Reconciliation along the way



## Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network

### Annex XII: The Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Board of Directors

**Norman Ragetlie**, is co-chair of the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network. He recently retired as executive director of the Rural Ontario Institute, where he had also served as Director of Policy and Stakeholder Engagement. In previous decades, he led a Community Economic Development unit with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, working as a registered professional planner focused on natural heritage conservation and an award winning participatory sustainable community development initiative in the Region of Hamilton-Wentworth. A lifelong volunteer, Norm served as chair of the Ontario Farmland Trust and was active in the local food cooperative movement. He is currently also chair of the newly formed Intersections Wood Collaborative and a trail captain for the Bruce Trail Conservancy near his home in Owen Sound.

**Charlene Winger-Jones**, is co-chair of the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network. She is an elder, Hereditary Council member, Water Walker, and Climate Reality Leader from Neyaashiinigiing (Chippewas of Nawash Unceded).

**Liette Vasseur**, board member of the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network, is a full professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at Brock University, where she is a member of the Environmental Sustainability Research Centre. She holds the UNESCO chair on Community Sustainability. Her research is interdisciplinary and links issues such as community-based ecosystem management, climate change adaptation and resilience, and sustainable agriculture. Her climate change adaptation research program encompasses different ecosystems from the rural community of Lincoln, Indigenous communities of San Juan, and in the Chimborazo, Ecuador. Liette is the Honorary President of the Canadian Commission UNESCO and deputy chair and vice-chair for North America of the Commission for Ecosystem Management, with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and co-lead of the thematic group on Climate Change and Biodiversity Policy and Practice.

**Walter Sendzik**, board member of the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network, was born and raised in St. Catharines. In 2014, as a first time candidate for political office, he was elected as Mayor of St. Catharines and has served two terms of office. Prior to becoming Mayor, Walter was the CEO of the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce. Walter founded Vines Publishing in 1998, a company specializing in wine and travel magazines and wine books. He sold the company in 2005. Walter has served on local and provincial boards including Niagara College, Hotel Dieu Shaver Hospital, Pathstone Children's Mental Health, the LCBO, and the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC). As Mayor, Walter served as chair of the Great Lakes



and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative Board of Directors, Niagara Regional Housing, and was a member Ontario Big City Mayors.

**Victoria Serda**, board member of the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network, lives in Saukiing Anishinaabekiing in Warton, and spends a lot of time on and in the Niagara Escarpment in the Saugeen Peninsula. She sits on the board of the Climate Reality Project Canada. In addition, Victoria is a settler ally and treasurer of the Bagida'waad Alliance, an Anishinaabe directed and managed environmental not-for-profit led by fishing families in Neyaashiinigiing, and recently became the executive director of the Bruce Peninsula Biosphere Association. She has been married to her husband Jaime since 1994, has a wonderful daughter Corrina, and enjoys teaching foraging to her four-year-old grandson Creegan, who is a Band Member of the Chippewas of Nawash and an expert in identifying bear corn, red raspberries, and keeshig.

**Mark Zelinski**, board member of the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network, trained as an artist and a designer, graduated as the top student of OCAD in 1979. His diverse career as a professional photographer has taken him across 80 countries, with clients ranging from The National Film Board of Canada to Panasonic. He is also a publisher, writer, painter, filmmaker, Fellow of the Royal Canadian Geographic Society, member of The Explorer's Club, and winner of the Canadian Governor General's Medal. Zelinski is best known for his "Books That Heal" initiative, donating 8,000 copies of his photography books to 100 worldwide charities. His internationally acclaimed photography books include forewords by HRH Prince Philip, The Honourable Lincoln Alexander, AFN Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day, and Justin Trudeau. Zelinski's books *Heart Of Turtle Island: The Niagara Escarpment* and upcoming sequel *Niagara Escarpment: Land Between Waters* bring exquisite focus to the environmental treasures of the Niagara Escarpment UNESCO World Biosphere, and to the diverse Indigenous and settler communities that thrive along its rugged, curving path. With ten years, ongoing, of extensive experience studying and documenting the Niagara Escarpment, he applies his knowledge in many ways, including as a member of the Board of Directors of the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network.

**Larry McDermott**, board member of the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network, Algonquin, is executive director of Plenty Canada, an Indigenous non-government organization devoted to the protection of Mother Earth, building healthy communities, and promoting cross-cultural awareness of the value of Indigenous ways of knowing to achieve a sustainable environment for future generations. A former three-time mayor and long-time council member of Lanark Highlands, chair of the Rural Forum of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, Larry is a member of numerous organisations, including the International Indigenous Forum for Biodiversity, the Ontario Species at Risk Public Advisory Committee, the Canadian Environmental Network, UNESCO, and the Ontario Recovery Strategy for the American Eel. Larry has also served as a comprehensive claim representative for Shabot Obaadjiwan First Nation, is a certified tree marker and butternut assessor, and holds other environmental certifications. He lives in a 170-year-old log home on 500 acres of biologically diverse Algonquin land along the Mississippi River.

**Tim Johnson**, board member of the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network, is the artistic director of The Great Niagara Escarpment Indigenous Cultural Map, the artistic producer of Celebration of Nations, and the executive producer of the multiple award-winning documentary *RUMBLE: The Indians Who Rocked The World*. As the former associate director for Museum Programs at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian, Tim managed the museum's largest organizational group across its facilities in Washington and New York. A long list of critically acclaimed exhibits and programs were produced during his tenure, creating an era that significantly advanced the institution's museology and reputation. Over the course of his work at the Smithsonian, Tim edited, conceptualized, and strategically initiated several Smithsonian books showcasing Indigenous art and history. He also established the museum's Indigenous Community Services department and was co-founder and publisher of the museum's flagship quarterly membership magazine, *American Indian*, now in its third decade of publication. Among his many highly successful Smithsonian programs was the museum's Mother Earth Festival, curated and implemented in conjunction with Al Gore's global Live Earth initiative held on July 7, 2007, which diffused American Indian knowledge and scientific evidence concerning environmental sustainability to thousands in attendance and millions watching around the world. Produced to enhance public education about human induced climate change, it stands as one of the Smithsonian Institution's most widely viewed public programs. As a leading figure who brought the reality and ramifications of climate change to the forefront in America's capital, Tim also served on the executive committee of the Smithsonian's 'Living in the Anthropocene Initiative,' a pan-institutional committee formed to advance public education about climate change and the implications of human conduct on the planet.

**Kerry Kennedy**, board member of the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network, is a passionate educator who enjoys working and volunteering with grassroots organizations in Niagara and along the shores of Lake Huron to protect and restore healthy ecosystems, while educating the next generation of conservationists. Working with the Lake Huron Coastal Centre, Kerry coordinates the Coastal Conservation Youth Corps in the summer, and during the school year works as an outdoor guide at the District School Board of Niagara's outdoor education centres. Connecting people and nature are themes that also extend through her roles as Past President of the Niagara Falls Nature Club and in her outreach efforts around Twelve Mile Creek, volunteering with the Niagara Chapter of Trout Unlimited Canada.

**Elder Josh Eshkawkogan**, board member of the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network, is a traditional healer, knowledge keeper, pipe carrier, sweat lodge conductor, Anishinaabe language speaker, orator, and cultural teachings provider. He is a member of the Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve, on Manitoulin Island, home of the Three Fires Confederacy. Josh specializes in providing spiritual guidance, emotional balance, grounding and wellbeing in helping people learn from life experiences. He conducts talking, sharing, and healing sessions, opening and closing ceremonies for schools, organizations, conferences, events, gatherings, and workshops in both the Anishinaabe and English languages.

**Jeff Barrett**, board member of the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network, is an entrepreneur, designer, educator, and devoted father. He is the founder of Canadian Wild Schools, co-founder of Vildhus Wellness Retreats, and a practicing landscape architect. With a passion for forging robust relationships and cultivating innovative ideas, Jeff's creative problem-solving is focused on bettering the planet.

Jeff's love for nature and adventurous spirit have led him across all seven continents, including both polar landscapes, guiding countless expeditions in some of the world's most remote environments. In the early 2000's, he successfully helped develop and manage a bear viewing lodge in the Great Bear Rainforest, BC. His involvement in ecotourism and ecoresort programs extends from Alaska to Oman, with notable contributions including the establishment of a community ecotourism program in Arviat, Nunavut, and the development of a thriving tourism industry for the Carcross Tagish First Nation in the Yukon.

He is the founder of Canadian Wild Schools, with locations in the Blue Mountains, the Yukon, and more in development, which combines academic rigor with real-world lessons while forging a deep connection to nature and self, nurturing a new generation of changemakers. Recently co-founding Vildhus, a transformative wellness retreat in the Blue Mountains, Jeff continues his commitment to better connecting humans with their natural environment, further emphasizing his dedication to creating positive and enduring impacts.

**Caley Patrick Nadjiwon Doran**, board member of the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network, comes from Saukiing Anishinaabekiing territory (Saugeen Ojibwe Nation) and lives in Sauble Beach. He is an Anishinaabe Interpretive Guide with the Cape Croker Park Anishinaabe Cultural Experiences program. After a 20+ year career in the hospitality industry, managing restaurants and large teams, Caley chose a new path connected to his passion for Mother Earth and he now follows the footsteps of his ancestors. You can find Caley guiding hikes and land-based learning across Saugeen Ojibway Nation.

**Leslie Adams**, board member of the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network, has thirty-five years of hands-on experience in the environmental not-for-profit sector and is an energetic organizer of system-wide initiatives, partnership programs, and innovative projects. She has been living adjacent to the Niagara Escarpment since 1996, when she moved from Montreal, Quebec to Georgetown, Ontario. For the past seven years, Leslie has been stewarding a small parcel of the escarpment. Her journey has led her to being involved in sustainable practices and she has participated from the international to the local level. Using international agendas, she strives to enable sustainability and sustainable development, with a particular focus on mainstreaming biodiversity and the Convention on Biological Diversity. Leslie is particularly interested in working to create a Biodiversity Strategy for the Escarpment, as well positioning the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network as a land-based platform for members to learn about and take action towards upholding sustainable development goals. - SE

## **Annex XIII: The Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System (NEPOSS) Highlights of Achievements from 2012-2023**

### **2012-13**

- Land acquisitions included:
  - Short Hills Nature Sanctuary (18-hectare nature reserve park) in Niagara Region, which is owned by the Hamilton Naturalists' Club was added to NEPOSS.
  - Campbellville Pond Conservation Area (1.6-hectare Escarpment Access park), which is located in Halton Region and owned by Conservation Halton was added to NEPOSS.
  - Bruce Trail Conservancy acquired five properties—Songbird Nature Reserve, Cedar Springs Woods, Fairmount Wetland, Kimberley Springs and Pinnacle Rock—totalling 118 hectares.
  - Several other agencies acquired lands to expand existing park boundaries.
- Additional NEPOSS highlights include:
- The Hamilton Naturalists' club was approved as a Conservation Organization under the NEP.
- NEC and MNR staff worked with agencies, including Conservation Halton and the Hamilton Conservation Authority, to undertake master planning exercises for some of their conservation areas.
- The NEPOSS Council met on several occasions to discuss park activities and management issues. The MNR sponsored and coordinated NEPOSS Council workshops on topics including: Sustainable Trail Design(International Mountain Biking Association Canada); Enforcement(Environment Canada); and Risk Management and Recreation Lands (Municipal Risk Services Ltd.).

### **2013-14**

- Land acquisitions included:
  - Pleasant View Conservation Sanctuary (36-hectare Natural Environment park) in the City of Hamilton, which is owned primarily by Conservation Halton added to NEPOSS.
  - York Road Access (21-hectare Escarpment Access park), which is located in the City of Hamilton and owned by the Hamilton Conservation Authority. Both parks were added to the System through the approval of NEP Amendment PW 179 – the Pleasant View Survey addition to the NEP Area.
  - The Bruce Trail Conservancy acquired 10 properties— totalling 201 hectares—which increased the proportion of Escarpment lands under public ownership. Several other agencies acquired lands to expand existing park boundaries.
- Additional NEPOSS highlights included:

- The NEPOSS Council engaged in discussions and early preparations for the development of a NEPOSS Strategic Plan. The objective is to develop a Plan that includes specific projects and actions that would actively move the Council forward toward fulfilling their mandate. A strategic planning session was held in 2014, and participation included representatives from park and open space agencies that manage and/or own public land in the NEPOSS.
- Staff continued to undertake a thorough review of the Park and Open Space Descriptions in Appendix 1 of the NEP. The goal is to update and correct errors in the park descriptions, update the NEPOSS mapping, and examine possible NEPOSS additions.
- The NEPOSS Council met to discuss park activities and management issues, including early engagement on the 2015 Plan Review NEPOSS Discussion Paper.
- The Mount Nemo Conservation Area (168 hectares) Master Plan, situated in the City of Burlington, Halton Region was approved. The conservation area includes the “Escarpment Natural Area” and “Escarpment Protection Area” designations and is classified as a “Natural Environment” park within the NEPOSS. The Master Plan proposes to protect the natural heritage resources on the site while providing opportunities for outdoor recreation and enjoyment. The proposed interpretive enhancements which include an interpretive pavilion and signage will support tourism and education. This is the first Master Plan in the NEPOSS to seek endorsement of exempted development under Section 5.41 of Ontario Regulation 828/90.

#### **2014-15**

- Land acquisitions included:
  - Bruce Trail Conservancy acquired 44 hectares.
  - Grey-Sauble Conservation Authority in partnership with other agencies acquired 18 hectares at the base of Old Baldy.
  - Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority acquired 10 hectares adjacent to Ball’s Falls Conservation Area.
- Additional NEPOSS highlights included
  - In 2014-15, the park and open space descriptions in the NEP were revised to reflect the most up-to-date information.
  - In addition, management plans were approved for three conservation areas managed by Conservation Halton: Hilton Falls, Rattlesnake Point and Crawford Lake.
  - Nine management plans were initiated and/or were under development : City of Hamilton (Churchill Park); Hamilton Conservation Authority (Spencer Gorge-Webster’s Falls Conservation Area, Mount Albion Conservation Area, and Crook’s Hollow); Credit Valley Conservation (Belfountain Conservation Area and Terra Cotta Conservation Area); Ontario Heritage Trust/Bruce Trail Conservancy (Cheltenham Badlands), and Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (Cave Springs Conservation Area and St. Johns Conservation Area).

#### **2015-16**

- NEPOSS highlights included:
  - Although no new park management plans were submitted for approval in 2015-16, the NEC and MNRF have participated in the development of new or revised management plans, including: Niagara Region, Cave Springs Conservation Area; City of Hamilton,

Mountain Brow City-owned lands; Halton Region, Mount Nemo Conservation Area; Peel Region, Cheltenham Badlands, Belfountain Conservation Area; Grey County, Friends of Kimberley Forest Community Management Plan.

- Through the Co-ordinated Land Use Planning Review, the NEC has proposed revisions to Part 3 of the NEP, which contains policies for NEPOSS. The NEC submitted the proposed revisions to the government for consideration as part of the Co-ordinated Review. If approved, these changes will help to clarify permitted uses on NEPOSS lands, and establish policies to manage the impacts associated with popular activities such as rock climbing, ropes courses, and snowmobiling.

## **2016-17**

- Additional NEPOSS highlights included:
  - Significant acquisitions by the Bruce Trail Conservancy (10 properties totalling 286 hectares).
  - Through the Co-ordinated Land Use Planning Review, the NEC has also proposed revisions to Part 3 of the NEP, which contains policies for NEPOSS. The NEC made its final recommendations to the government on the proposed NEPOSS policies in December 2016. If approved, these changes will help to clarify permitted uses on NEPOSS lands, and establish policies to manage the impacts associated with popular activities such as rock climbing, ropes courses, and snowmobiling.
  - In March 2017, the NEPOSS Council collaborated with the Centre for Applied Science in Ontario's Protected Spaces (CASIOPA) to host a one-day conference focused on solutions to the challenges of increasing visitation to Ontario's protected areas. Speakers from Trossachs National Park in Scotland, Bruce Peninsula National Park, Royal Botanical Gardens and Ontario Heritage Trust shared their experiences. It was a successful day with more than two hundred participants from across Ontario in attendance.
  - NEC and MNRF participated in the development of new or revised management plans, including: Niagara Region, Cave Springs Conservation Area; City of Hamilton, Mountain Brow City-owned lands and Churchill Park; Halton Region, Mount Nemo and Kelso-Glen Eden Conservation Areas Peel Region, Cheltenham Badlands and Belfountain Conservation Area.

## **2017-18**

- Land acquisitions included:
  - The Bruce Trail Conservancy acquired 13 properties, totaling 274 hectares of conservation lands, including its largest ever land donation of 93 hectares: the Cape Dundas Nature Reserve.
  - Other land acquisitions by NEPOSS agencies include a 17.4-hectare parcel acquired by Hamilton Conservation Authority in the Dundas Valley, adding to the 1,259 hectares already managed by HCA in the Valley.
- Other NEPOSS highlights included:
  - The NEC endorsed the City of Hamilton's master plan for Churchill Park. The master plan successfully balances active recreational uses in the park with the need to manage access to the adjacent Cootes Paradise environmentally sensitive area.

- Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority completed its master plan for the Cave Springs Conservation Area and has submitted it to the NEC and MNRF for approval.
- Credit Valley Conservation continues to work on a master plan for Belfountain Conservation Area, with the goal of conserving the cultural heritage value of the park, while protecting species at risk and managing the high demand for public access.
- Ontario Heritage Trust is near completion of the management plan for Cheltenham Badlands, while moving forward with key visitor management infrastructure with the goal of restoring public access to the Badlands in 2018.
- In Grey County, MNRF has partnered with the Friends of Kimberley Forest Committee to undertake trail repair and restoration within the 403-hectare Kimberley Forest (Wodehouse Karst Resource Management Area), as well as to improve visitor experience through a social media presence, digital mapping, and trail signage.

## 2018-19

- Land acquisitions included:
  - Bruce Trail Conservancy, in partnership with Parks Canada, secured Driftwood Cove, that includes more than eight kilometres of Bruce Trail and more than 3,272 acres (1,324 hectares) of new lands to be added to Bruce Peninsula National Park.
- Other NEPOSS highlights:
  - The NEC endorsed Credit Valley Conservation's master plan for **Belfountain Conservation Area**, including a new state-of-the-art visitor centre to serve as a focal point for park activities and interpretation
  - Ontario Heritage Trust re-opened the **Cheltenham Badlands** to the public in Fall 2018 and received the NEC's endorsement of its management plan.
  - Conservation Halton worked towards completion of its master plan for **Kelso Conservation Area and the Glen Eden Ski Centre**.
  - The NEPOSS Council is participating in the update of the NEPOSS Planning Manual (2012), which is used by NEPOSS agencies to guide the management/master planning process

## 2019-20

- Land acquisitions included:
  - Bruce Train Conservancy preserved 328 acres within that timeframe consisting of 10 acquisitions.
- Other NEPOSS highlights:
  - Grey Sauble Conservation Authority initiated the Management Plan process, including initial public consultations, for the Inglis Falls Conservation Area. GSCA also undertook major improvements at Spirit Rock Conservation Area and Pottawatomi/Jones Falls Conservation Area;

- The Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority received approval to proceed with the removal of a dam on Black Ash Creek in the Petun Conservation Area. Dam removal will result in reduced temperatures in Black Ash Creek and improve brook and rainbow trout habitat. A healthy fishery will contribute to the recreational and economic value of the Collingwood area sport fishery;
- The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's Trail Strategy for the Greater Toronto Region was approved by its board. The strategy establishes a vision for a connected network of 1,000 km of trails through regional greenspace system, including 480 km of new trails. TRCA also initiated background work on a master plan for its NEPOSS properties, including Glen Haffy Conservation Park, Glen Haffy Extension, Mono Mills and Humber Valley;
- Ontario Heritage Trust experienced its first full season of operations at the Cheltenham Badlands since it reopened to the public in 2018. Final visitor numbers for the 2019 season (April to October) totaled 106,923 visitors. OHT won the National Trust Award for the Badlands Visitor Infrastructure project.
- City of Burlington received approval for the construction of its City View Park Pavillion, featuring state-of-the-art sustainable design and interpretive displays celebrating natural and cultural heritage of the Niagara Escarpment. Overall, City View Park provides an excellent example of how a recreational park can be integrated into the Niagara Escarpment.
- City of Hamilton completed the first phase of the implementation of the Churchill Park management plan. Additionally, the City completed the public consultation and design work for a new masterplan for Sam Lawrence Park – while this isn't a NEPOSS park, it is a significant cultural site along the Escarpment and known for its spectacular views of Hamilton and Lake Ontario.
- Ontario Parks continues to protect significant natural heritage features and offer exceptional recreational opportunities along the Escarpment. Ontario Parks works collaboratively with the Bruce Trail Conservancy, including trail work with local clubs to improve visitor experiences and ensures protection of natural heritage features. Ontario Parks also supports a number of research and monitoring projects in various provincial parks in the NEPOSS.

## **2020-21**

- Land acquisitions included:
  - The Bruce Trail Conservancy is on track to acquire 12 properties totalling more than 320 hectares (800 acres) and nine kilometres of optimum route in 2022. While the trail is experiencing challenges related to the dramatic increase in use in recent years, the BTC is working towards an informal goal of developing a new parking lot in each of the nine sections of trail.
- Other NEPOSS highlights:
  - In 2021, the Ministry approved an update of the NEPOSS Planning Manual. The Manual is used by NEPOSS agencies to guide the management/master planning process.
  - Terms of Reference for the NEPOSS Council was also updated. Updates included new initiatives for NEPOSS Council such as providing effective leadership for coordinated park management and stewardship and supporting the growth of NEPOSS. Each organization has



one member except for Ontario Parks (Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks) and Bruce Trail Conservancy that have larger representation as their agencies manage parks across the entire Niagara Escarpment.

- o Belfountain Conservation Area Management Plan was approved in 2021. The property will be reopened to the public in May 2022 and fundraising for Phase II is underway by the Credit Valley Conservation Authority.
- o Increased visitation is an ongoing challenge for Council member agencies, requiring additional investment in infrastructure to address capacity issues and conflicts such as parking and traffic. The Council is providing a forum to engage in dialogue on how to address these challenges and share positive solutions. For example, many members have identified collaborations with local municipalities to align “plan ahead” messaging. Other strategies include setting visitor area capacities and managing trespass and other violations through education.

## **2022-23**

- NEPOSS highlights included:
  - o Ongoing work with Country Heritage Park on an update to their existing Park Management Plan;
  - o Initiation of a Park Management Plan for Conservation Halton’s Clappison and Waterdown Woods; and
  - o Initiation of a Park Management Plan for Inglis Falls Conservation Area by the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority.
  - o An ongoing challenge continuing to be faced by the Council member agencies is with respect to increased visitation. and the capacity issues and conflicts that arise as a result, including parking, traffic and need for additional infrastructure to support users.
  - o Parks Canada has been working with the Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SON) and other partners, to protect species at risk and of cultural importance, and culturally significant places and values. This approach acknowledges the strong benefit in taking a “Two-eyed Seeing approach.”
  - o Parks Canada has also partnered with the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) to build eco-passages and fences along the busy main provincial highway accessing the Park, and has developed citizen science programs in multiple communities to protect nesting turtles, mitigating road mortality in high traffic areas.

## Annex XIV: Commission's Engagement, Education and Outreach Highlights 2013-2023

### (Source: Annual Reports of the Niagara Escarpment Commission)

The NEC encourages awareness of the NEP and the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve (NEBR) to the public, partners and clients by: Promoting the objectives of the NEP and the NEPDA through sustainable land use planning and policy implementation in the NEP Area; Increasing awareness of the Niagara Escarpment through a variety of outreach and communications initiatives; Providing opportunities for information and knowledge exchange between Niagara Escarpment community partners has been a priority for the NEC and the NEB. Some highlights over the last 10 years include:

#### 2013-14

- October 2013 - Leading Edge conference series held in Milton, Ontario over 200 participants.
- Participated in the 2013 "EuroMab" Conference held in the Frontenac Arc Biosphere Reserve in Brockville, ON. Representatives from over 190 World Biosphere Reserves were in attendance. The theme of the conference was 'Engaging our Communities', and it provided an opportunity to strengthen relationships between experts and practitioners and share knowledge and practical ideas on implementing conservation and sustainability principles in Biosphere Reserves.

#### 2014-2015

- **May 2014** - Presentation and field trip with the Ontario Association for Geographic and Environmental Education to the Craigeleith Provincial Park and the Len Gertler Memorial Loree Forest.
- **May 2014** - Presentations to the Ontario Association of Committees of Adjustment and Consent Authorities (OACA) about the NEPDA, NEP and an overview of how the NEC staff process Development Permits and Plan Amendments.
- **August and September 2014** - Presentations to students from University of Waterloo, Brock University and University of Toronto. The presentations provided an overview of the NEC program, including discussion on the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve's recent periodic review and the Ontario's Niagara Escarpment Monitoring program.
- **January 2015** - Convened a preliminary meeting with a number of NEBR partners, many of which participated in the 10-year Periodic Review to explore the benefits of a more formalized and collaborative biosphere reserve network. All participants expressed support for making the existing informal NEBR network more formal.
- **February 2015** -, Hosted a UNESCO-led workshop for a diverse cross section of NEB organizations, representing a variety of interests to pilot a "Brand and Story" toolkit being developed by UNESCO-MAB.

#### 2015-2016

- 2015 marked the **25-year milestone of the Niagara Escarpment** as a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve.
- June 2015 - Facilitated development of a more **formal network of the NEB practitioners**, which includes a diversity of First Nations, government, non-government and environmental organizations, academic institutions, conservation authorities and various businesses. The purpose of the network is to share responsibility for the NEB and create a common framework and structure to improve communication and collaboration. Over 40 NEB practitioners attended the workshop in Mono, Ontario.
- **January 2016** - a working group solicited feedback from NEB practitioners on **the draft TOR**. The establishment of a formal network for the NEBR is a very positive development and will be a significant milestone in the 25-year history of the NEBR. The network will help expand public awareness of the UNESCO MAB Program.
- **2015-16** - Work on an improved NEC website, including an integrated mapping component and **virtual tour** of the Niagara Escarpment to improve customer service and promote awareness of the Niagara Escarpment, the NEC, and the NEBR;
- **July 2015** - staff attended and presented about the history and geology of the Niagara Escarpment at the rededication ceremony of the **Old Baldy Plaque** as part of Canada Day celebrations at Kimberley Park in **Beaver Valley**. The celebration was attended by about 55 people.
- **August 2015** - Presentation to fourth year Biology students from the **University of Waterloo**, highlighted the NEC, the importance and roles of biosphere reserves, and the value of monitoring biodiversity.
- **September 2015** - the NEC Chair, Don Scott gave a speech on the NEC and NEB at the 20th Anniversary Celebration of the **Blue Mountain Watershed Trust Foundation**.
- **January 2016** - NEC staff instructed Masters of Forest Conservation students at the University of Toronto. The lecture outlined the natural history of the Niagara Escarpment, the NEB and the NEC program.
- **February 2016** - Presentation to City of Hamilton on the NEP, development permits, compliance program and benefits of the NEB.
- **May 2015** - Participated in the Ontario Biodiversity Summit in Niagara Falls, Ontario.
- **May 2015** - Attended the **EuroMAB Conference**, "Biosphere Reserves: from Heritage to Sustainable Innovation" held in Haapsalu, Estonia. NEC staff assisted in presenting the outcomes of the NEBR experiences with the EuroMAB Brand and Story pilot project and to facilitate a workshop on the toolkit with other members of the EuroMAB network. This provided a unique opportunity to foster relationships with the national and international biosphere community.
- **November 2015** - the NEBR was selected by the UNESCO Euro-MAB Committee to participate in a pilot Brand and Story Toolkit Project, which aims to create a core brand for world biosphere reserves that is simple, consistent and powerful and to develop tools to assist individual biospheres to communicate and market their biosphere reserve locally. The NEBR was one of four pilot world biosphere sites that participated in the international project. The NEC showcased the process used to develop the NEB's new vision, "A place where people share a way of living with nature that builds a future we're proud of," at a number of events including: the Ontario Biodiversity Summit in Niagara Falls, the EuroMAB Conference in Estonia and the 4th World Congress for Biosphere Reserves in Peru.

- NOTE: UNESCO released the "The Opportunity - How can a common approach across the network help to engage people in biosphere reserves?" by Brighton & Hove and Lewes Biosphere, UK. The vision is "inspire a positive future by connecting people and nature today."
- [https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/mab\\_communication\\_toolkit\\_en.pdf](https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/mab_communication_toolkit_en.pdf)
- [https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/annexe3\\_brandandstory\\_toolkit.pdf](https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/annexe3_brandandstory_toolkit.pdf)
- Global Partnerships: The NEBR hosted delegates from China, Korea and a visit by Braulio Dias, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) for the United Nations to discuss the benefits of biosphere reserves.
  - **In July 2015** - Hosted delegates from **Shenyang, China** where they learned about biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in the NEB.
  - **In August 2015** - Hosted Braulio Dias, **Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** for the United Nations. The visit was an opportunity to discuss biodiversity in the NEB and the alignment of NEB objectives for biodiversity conservation with the CBD's Aichi targets.
  - **October 2015** - Presentation on the NEBR to ten delegates from **Korea**. The objective of the visit was to gain an understanding of the process that was undertaken in order for the NEBR to obtain the UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve designation and the work required to maintain it. Representatives provided the delegates with a virtual tour of the NEBR and shared best practices on biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.
- **March 2016**- Participated in the 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves in Lima, Peru. Staff were invited to assist with Congress sessions that shared the outcomes of the Brand and Story pilot project and facilitated discussions with other global delegates on how biosphere reserves can effectively inspire and connect people with nature. This opportunity allowed the NEBR to connect with delegates from over 120 nations on biosphere reserve topics and themes. Additionally, there was an opportunity to comment on the Lima Action Plan before it was endorsed by the Congress.

## 2016-17

- **April 2016** - NEC staff participated in the 56th General Meeting of CCUNESCO in Winnipeg, Manitoba The NEC continues to promote awareness of the NEP and the NEBR at the local, national, and global level.
- **June 2016** - Hosted a workshop with community partners to introduce **the Amazing Places initiative** to the NEBR. This initiative is underway in other biosphere reserves across Canada and is focused on encouraging people to explore Ontario's biosphere reserves
- **June 2016** - Presentation to City of Burlington on the NEC, NEB and Development Permits.
- **September 2016** - Hosted two public information sessions in Mulmur and Owen Sound to discuss proposed changes to the Niagara Escarpment Plan including potential additions to the plan area.

- **October 2016** - Presentation to a Chinese delegation on the Niagara Escarpment Commission, Niagara Escarpment Plan and the UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve status.
- **November 2016** - Presented at a Planner's Panel hosted by the Southern Georgian Bay Association of Realtors about the Coordinated Land-Use Planning Review and update to the NEP.
- **November 2016** - Participation on a panel of speakers at the Latornell conference;
- **February 2017** - Presentation on the NEB and monitoring to University of Toronto forestry students and
- **March 2017**- Participation on a panel of speakers at the University of Guelph School of Rural Planning and Development.
- **2016-17**, the NEB focused on establishing an NEBR network. The goal of the network will be to support the objectives of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme through the collective commitments and actions of the NEBR network. To do this, representation would be needed from all of the identified communities for engagement, including Indigenous communities. Plenty Canada was contracted to develop and implement an engagement strategy to focus on tactics and approaches to encourage Indigenous participation in further NEB network initiatives.
- **2016-17** - NEC staff met with representatives in various Escarpment municipalities to discuss the proposed policy changes to the Niagara Escarpment Plan.

## 2017-18

- **2017-18** - the key focus was to plan and execute outreach initiatives to promote awareness of the new policies of the plan and NEC processes, and of the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve.
  - The NEC hosted six interactive outreach sessions (three, two-day session) for municipalities, conservation authorities and key stakeholders in the Northern, Central and Southern regions of the Niagara Escarpment with more than **350 people attending**
  - NEC participated the 2017 Ontario Professional Planners Institute Conference which focused on the new 2017 NEP
  - NEC participated in the 2017 Latornell Symposium discussing the new 2017 NEP policies
- **2017-18**, the NEC, continued to facilitate the development of improved governance options for the biosphere reserve over the long-term. The NEC, on behalf of the biosphere reserve, together with Plenty Canada, a not-for-profit organization focused on promoting traditional Indigenous knowledge systems, developed and delivered an outreach strategy to foster participation of Indigenous peoples in the biosphere reserve. Indigenous outreach workshops were held on **May 2, 2017 at Six Nations of the Grand River**, and in Tobermory at **the Bruce Peninsula National Park on June 27, 2017** in the territory of the Saugeen Ojibway Nation. The sessions were a positive first step in better understanding the value Indigenous people have in achieving the biosphere reserve objectives and is a first step in the process of recognizing our responsibility as a biosphere reserve to engage Indigenous communities meaningfully and to encourage and enable greater participation and input into biosphere reserve.

- **2018-19** - see transition story for details of initiatives led by the NEC to develop a new governance structure and transition to the new NEBN. The NEC performed the role of central convenor for the Biosphere Reserve from 1990 - 2019. This role has formally been conveyed to a Transitional Leadership Committee (TLC), formed in 2019 and now a formal network.

## **2019-20**

- **2019-20**, the NEC delivered the following education and outreach activities:
  - The NEC hosted workshops in the summer of 2019 that were well attended by many NEBR stakeholders, public interest groups, and garnered some involvement from members of indigenous communities. The goal of the workshops was to develop a more collaborative and community-driven leadership model for the NEBR that is better equipped to co-ordinate and execute on-the-ground conservation efforts across the Niagara Escarpment.
  - The culmination of this phase of the project in September 2019 saw a Transitional Leadership Committee (TLC) formed that is acting as the interim convenor of the NEBR. The Committee is led by four (4) community individuals who were self-selected with the input of the NEBR network. This interim Committee is tasked with finalizing a permanent governance structure for the NEBR, developing a communications plan to better engage the overall network, and exploring options for a co-management/co-leadership model with indigenous communities.
- **2019-20** - Presented at several community partner events to increase awareness of the new 2017 NEP and the NEB network:
  - March 2019 - Planning event hosted by Grey County
  - 2 Webinars with the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks regarding Species and Risk and NEP policies
  - April 2019 - Ontario Association of Landscape Architects
  - May 2019 - Niagara on the Lake Municipal and Stakeholder educational event
  - June 2019, Town of Lincoln
  - July 2019, Milton Farmer's Market
  - August 2019, Brock University
  - November 2019, Conservation Halton
  - November 2019 - Belfountain Public School
  - January 2020 - University of Guelph, Advanced Planning Class
  - January 2020 - Bruce Trail Conservancy
  - January 2020 - Brock University
  - February 2020 - Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority
  - Halton Area Planning Workshop
  - January 2019 - Ecological Restoration event for NPO/NGO groups in Niagara Region

- Bruce County Natural Legacy Technical Advisory Group
- Landscape Architecture Student Research - research to address Beaver Valley cultural landscapes and trail design
  
- **2020-21** - NEC did a number of educational/outreach events adapting to delivering these on line:
  - Bruce Trail Conservancy Land Acquisition Meeting - areas of collaboration and shared interest
  - Canadian Institute of Planning Webinar - NEP policies
  - Halton Natural Advisory Committee - NEP policies, Regional Growth Concepts Evaluation
  - Town of Blue Mountains "Data Walk" - workshop to establish a Blue Mountains Community Sustainability Plan
  - University of Guelph - provincial land use policies including NEP affecting rural planning, agricultural use and research
  - University of Toronto, Environmental Planning Program - NEP policies
  - Milton Quarry Community Advisory Panel - Milton quarry expansion and NEP policies
  - Multiple community groups, BTC, Grey County, Grey Highlands, NDMNRF, MECP - discuss expansion of Bruce Trail system
  - Ontario Farmland Trust - Farmland 2021 - panel discussion on building successful province-wide agricultural systems
  
- **2021-22** - Transitional Leadership Committee (TLC) for the NEBN formed in 2019 continues to act as the interim convener of the NEBR. The Committee is led by four (4) community individuals who were self-selected with the input of the NEB network. This interim Committee is tasked with finalizing a permanent governance structure for the NEB, developing a communications plan to better engage the overall network, and exploring options for a co-management/co-leadership model with indigenous communities.
  
- **2021-22** NEC did a number of educational/outreach events adapting to delivering these on line:
  - Indigenous Policy Branch, MNRF - discussion on how to enhance consultation with First Nations.
  - City of Hamilton staff - discussed Pleasant View Lands and the addition of area to development control under the NEP
  - Town of Mono Presentation on Development Permit Application Process
  - Halton Region Presentation on NEP Policy related to agricultural use.
  - Halton Region/City of Burlington Presentation on NEP infrastructure policies.
  - Landscape of Nations/Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve (NEBR) event NEBR outreach event to introduce the “**Building Relations through Ethical Space**” project.
  - Chestnut Park Realtor’s Association Presentation on the Development Permit Application process.
  - Town of Caledon Meeting to discuss coordination of NEC and municipal commenting on DP circulation.
  - Owen Sound Rotary Club Presentation on Niagara Escarpment Biosphere and NEP policies related to climate change.
  - Township of Georgian Bluffs Discussion of NEP policies and opportunities for collaboration

- Ontario Farmland Trust: Farmland 2021 Panel discussions on building successful province-wide agricultural systems.
- **March 2022** - NEBN officially became incorporated under provincial regulations. The NEBN is now the official entity that is working on the mandate and designation of the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere region. Through an agreement between the TLC and Plenty Canada, and with support from Environment and Climate Change Canada.
- **In 2022-2023**, NEC staff continued to seek opportunities to exchange knowledge with internal and external partners and agencies. The following table lists the most significant sessions NEC staff held or attended in 2022-2023.
  - Bruce Trail Conservancy meetings
  - NEPOSS Council Meeting
  - Communicators Event: Inclusive Writing Workshop - staff learning opportunity provided an in-depth coverage of style guide topics and tips for inclusive writing.
  - Archaeology Lunch and Learn - staff learning opportunity about the work done by archaeologists.
- **In 2023-24** the NEC focused on digital communications and marketing to implement its "**Communicate, Consult and Collaborate**" initiative. The initiative continues to inform how the NEC relates with clients, ministry stakeholders, members of the public, and Indigenous communities along the Niagara Escarpment. Specifically, the NEC has recently undertaken an initiative to redesign and make significant improvements to its external website. Work began in late 2022 on Phase One, which would improve the user's experience. The newly redesigned website was launched in February 2023. Phase 2 of the website redesign project is expected to be completed in 2023-24 and is focusing on providing educational resources about the Niagara Escarpment, the NEB and the rationale for protection and conservation.



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