

NATURAL AREAS INVENTORY

2006-2009

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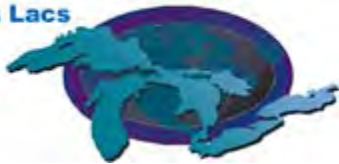


NIAGARA PENINSULA
CONSERVATION
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A sincere thank you to all of our project partners!



Great Lakes Sustainability Fund /
Le Fonds de durabilité des
Grands Lacs



Niagara Falls
Nature Club



Natural Heritage Areas Inventory
-Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority Watershed-

Abstract

The Natural Heritage Areas Inventory of Niagara and Haldimand is a project conducted between April 2006 and December 2009 for the purpose of identifying, classifying and mapping natural heritage areas in our watershed (NPCA's jurisdiction). The goal of the project was to use industry standard, scientifically-defensible protocols to inventory all of the natural areas in our community.

Those who have spent time in the natural areas in and around Niagara know that this part of the province, with its Carolinian heritage and proximity to the Great Lakes, is a treasure trove of natural wonders. These areas support a rich diversity of natural features including rare plants and animals, significant habitats and geological formations, and important wildlife corridors. A comprehensive biological inventory to document the vegetative communities of our watershed and their inhabitants has never been completed.

As data was collected, the project built on existing information ultimately confirming the significance of known sites and filling information gaps. The result is a solid resource of information, which includes accurate natural heritage mapping, a list of local rarity, and site specific species information that will be of tremendous benefit to all watershed residents.

The data collected through the project has helped to foster the development of greater environmental awareness within the community, prioritize restoration opportunities and, will serve as baseline for planning decisions and policy development.

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Acknowledgements

The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) wishes to acknowledge the collaborative effort of all of our project partners. What began as a NPCA initiative quickly gathered the support of first the Regional Municipality of Niagara and the Peninsula Field Naturalists, then several other agencies and funding partners. All 12 lower tier Niagara municipalities lent their support through funding by way of the Niagara Water Quality Protection Strategy, and in some instances by supplying data. The County of Haldimand supplied the NAI team with data as well as three years of funding for the work in their portion of the watershed.

The Hamilton and Halton NAI teams gave valuable advice during the planning stages of this project and whenever the Niagara Team called with a question. Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources ELC Team lead by Harold Lee was generous with both their time and knowledge in the planning of the project, and in the field. Your guidance throughout this process was greatly appreciated.

The NPCA Management Team of Suzanne McInnes, Watershed Planning Coordinator; Deanna Lindblad, Natural Areas Inventory Project Coordinator; and Geoffrey Verkade, GIS Coordinator also wish to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of our staff. Field Technicians, Albert Garofalo, Tom Staton, Ryan Kitchen, and Kasondra White; Field Assistants, Rosalie Ng, Barry Porter, Said Mohamed, Kerry Royer, and Katleya Young-Chin; and GIS Technicians, Jeff Lee and Piper McKinnon. We would also like to thank Brianne Wilson for coordinating the project in its second year. You often went above and beyond what was required of you in order to produce a product we can all be proud of. Thank you!

The Steering Committee members were responsible for helping to guide the project and offer advice for adaptive management along the way. The Steering Committee included: Chairman-Roman Olszewski (PFN), Barbara Mugabe/Eric Lalonde (Haldimand County), Debbie Whitehouse/Robert Ritchie/Mark Buma (NPC), Don Campbell/Ken Forgeron (Region of Niagara), Henry Swierenga (OFA), John Potter (PFN), Brenda Axon (Conservation Halton), Cathy Plosz (City of Hamilton), Joad Durst (MNR), Dan McDonell/Sandra Kok (Environment Canada). Your support and guidance were instrumental in the success of this project.

Technical Committee members spent many hours reviewing reports and offering technical advice to the project team. The Technical Committee members included: Michael Oldham (NHIC/MNR), Anthony Goodban (Rare Vegetation Types Report), Bob Curry (Lepidoptera and Odonata Report), John Black and Kayo Roy (Birds of the Niagara Region Report), Roman Olszewski (Lichens and Bryophytes Report), Bert Murphy (Geologic Descriptions), Lisa Grbinicek (NEC), Kevin Rich (Ducks Unlimited), Donald Kirk (MNR), Robert Ritchie/ Mark Buma (NPC), Rob Tervo (MNR – SAR), Anne Yagi (MNR), Amy Brant (MNR-SAR), Karine Beriault (MNR-SAR), Naturalist Club Representatives: Rick Young, Joyce Sankey, Jim Grassie (Niagara Falls Nature Club); John Potter, Roman Olszewski (Peninsula Field Naturalists); Dawn Pierrynowski, Rick Stockton, Tim Seburn (Bert Miller Nature Club). Thank you for your patience, and for graciously offering your limited time and vast knowledge.

Two volunteer teams made up of members from the three area naturalists' clubs (Niagara Falls Nature Club, Peninsula Field Naturalists and the Bert Miller Nature Club) participated in the project both as expert volunteers in the field, and as Steering and Technical Committee members. They spent more than 1500 hours in the field over the three years of the project. Your level of dedication to our efforts was unmatched in this process. You are truly the heroes of this endeavour. A special thank you goes out to Joyce Sankey, Jim Grassie, Rick Young and John Potter for their expert leadership of these teams in the field.

Cash contributions to the project were made by the following partners: Region of Niagara; Great Lakes Sustainability Fund; Ontario Trillium Foundation; County of Haldimand; EJLB Foundation; The McLean Foundation; ECO Canada; Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Community Fisheries/Wildlife Involvement Project; Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Job Creation Partnership; Niagara Community Foundation; and the Peninsula Field Naturalists. Without your generous support, this project would not have been able to visit as many sites, or collect as much valuable information. We are forever grateful.

In-kind support for the project was received from the following partners: Peninsula Field Naturalists, Region of Niagara, Hamilton Naturalists' Club, Niagara Falls Nature Club, Bert Miller Nature Club, Conservation Halton, Hamilton Region Conservation Authority, Bird Studies Canada, Royal Ontario Museum, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, and Land Care Niagara. A special mention to Natalie Iwanycki and her team at the Royal Botanical Gardens for housing the thousands of specimens collected in the field and for your help with identification. Brock University Librarian and expert naturalist Marcie Jacklin was instrumental in the creation and editing of the various reference sections of this report. Finally, to Michael Oldham, Wasyl Bakowski and Sam Brinker of the Natural Heritage Information Centre, thank you for your endless patience in answering our questions, aiding us with identification, and for your wonderful report. We greatly appreciate all of these contributions.

And, to the hundreds of private landowners that allowed our inventory teams unprecedented access to their properties, thank you! Without your overwhelmingly positive support of our efforts, this project simply would not have been possible. All of our expectations when it came to the support of landowners were far exceeded proving that this watershed is full of individuals that truly care about the natural environment, and are doing their part to protect it.

The dedication of all of the project partners helped us to exceed our goals. It is our hope that the data collected and shared through this work will lead to not only a deeper understanding of the ecosystems of our watershed, but also help us to better plan for the future. We want these systems to not just continue to exist on the landscape, but rather thrive. We view this document not as the end but as the beginning of a more concentrated effort to document, monitor and protect the natural areas of our watershed.

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