



The Bruce Trail: your good neighbour

HELP US PROTECT OUR
CONSERVATION CORRIDOR



Close to nature.
Close to home.

THE BRUCE TRAIL
CONSERVANCY



The Bruce Trail Conservancy

Our Mission

The Bruce Trail Conservancy is a charitable organization committed to establishing a conservation corridor containing a public footpath along the Niagara Escarpment, in order to protect its natural ecosystems and to promote environmentally responsible public access to this UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve.

For over 40 years, visionaries, private landowners, members and donors have worked diligently to support the mission of the Bruce Trail Conservancy to secure a Conservation Corridor along the Niagara Escarpment. Today, the BTC is one of Ontario's largest land trusts, protecting and caring for more than 7,000 acres of Escarpment land.

Hello Neighbour,

We need your help!

As you may be aware, the Bruce Trail runs through a property that is adjacent to yours. It is also one of more than 180 properties that are either owned or managed by the Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC).

The Bruce Trail is a public hiking path that spans almost 900 kilometres. It follows the Niagara Escarpment, which was designated a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve in 1990. This designation is shared by such world famous places as the Serengeti, the Florida Everglades and Yellowstone National Park.

According to the Niagara Escarpment Commission, the Niagara Escarpment is home to:

- 40% of Ontario's rare plant species
- The oldest trees in all of North America – Eastern White Cedars that are more than 1000 years old!
- Most of the world's population of the rare American Hart's Tongue Fern
- 37 species of orchid
- 25 nationally or provincially endangered, threatened or vulnerable birds



Rue Anemone, a provincially rare species, near the Trail

The Bruce Trail Conservancy

The goal of the Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC) is to establish and preserve a conservation corridor for the Bruce Trail along the Escarpment. We aim to protect the Escarpment's natural ecosystems and promote environmentally responsible public access so that future generations can experience the beautiful scenery and unique features of this World Biosphere Reserve. The purpose of the Bruce Trail is to provide people like you with the opportunity to hike along the Niagara Escarpment, all the way from Niagara to Tobermory.



This stream is only steps away from one of our neighbours

Properties such as the one adjacent to you are important to the BTC because they give us a chance to ensure the ongoing protection and health of the natural communities through which the Trail runs. To do this we need all the help we can get.

You can help!

- Do not dispose of any garbage or yard waste into the natural area
- Fight the urge to “Clean Up” our natural area; don’t remove leaves, branches, stumps, logs, trees or anything else that is there naturally
- Respect our property boundaries when storing materials or building fences and structures
- Never drain your pool into our natural area
- Be aware of any potentially invasive species in your garden that could spread into our natural area
- Keep an eye on our property for us and spread the word about the Bruce Trail!

Dumping

Most of us agree that dumping of household or industrial waste is unacceptable. Nobody likes having garbage on their property. Apart from detracting from the beauty of a natural area, illegal dumping can have environmental and human health impacts such as:

- Leaching contaminates into the soil and waterways
- Blocking waterways from properly flowing
- Exposing plants, animals and people to dangerous chemicals
- Exposing people to dangerous objects that could injure them

It is important to never illegally dispose of garbage in a natural area.

Although it is clear that human-made waste can harm the natural environment, many people don't realize the damage that organic waste can have on a natural area.

Organic waste can smother native vegetation, alter unique soil conditions and lead to the introduction of invasive species. It can also be unsightly and take years



Dumping yard waste in a natural area can smother native vegetation and spread invasive plants

to properly break down. Disposing of organic waste on a municipal yard waste collection date protects the natural environment from these detrimental impacts.

These are examples of organic waste that SHOULD NOT be disposed of in a natural area:

- grass clippings
- compost
- hedge trimmings
- cut branches
- leaves
- yard waste
- potted plants
- soil or fill
- ash from a fireplace

Cleaning Up

It is important to remember that nature is happiest left alone. Naturally occurring leaves, branches, logs and trees are all an important part of the ecological cycling of natural areas. They provide habitat for all kinds of interesting and potentially rare species, like the Yellow Spotted Salamander that lives under rotting logs and leaves.



The Yellow Spotted Salamander is considered rare in the Niagara Region and spends much of its life under logs and leaves

We try to have as little of an impact as we can on our properties; the Trail is the only area that we keep clear. We ask for your help in leaving our property as it is.

These are all examples of important naturally occurring elements that are best left as they are:

- logs
- leaves
- branches
- stumps
- dead trees

If you do happen to notice something hazardous, please bring it to our attention and we will be happy to address it. We have a team of staff and volunteers that are constantly working to keep our properties safe and ecologically healthy.



This natural forest debris provides a home for Red-backed Salamanders

Encroachment

The Bruce Trail is open for everyone to use, but we ask that people remain on the Trail. This extends to our neighbours, and we ask that our property boundaries are respected.

These are examples of things that don't belong on BTC property, for the sake of the environment and, in many cases, safety:

- sheds
- playgrounds
- gardens
- flower beds
- mown grass
- stored equipment or supplies
- vehicles



This bike ramp was built on BTC property

We appreciate that it is sometimes hard to know exactly where a property boundary is. If we happen to notice an encroachment onto our property, we will contact whoever is responsible and ask for cooperation in correcting it.



An example of garbage that was left on BTC land

Pools

Although it may not seem like it, pool backwash can be very destructive to a natural area. Directing pool discharge into a natural area, especially down a slope, can be harmful to vegetation, create severe erosion and introduce destructive chemicals such as chlorine to natural communities. Many amphibians such as frogs and salamanders are extremely sensitive to environmental conditions and could be affected by the chemicals present in pool water. Pool discharge can also cause flooding and damage to downslope properties. When draining your pool, the discharge should be directed to a municipal storm sewer instead of natural areas.



Erosion gully from pool discharge

Invasive Species

The spread of invasive species is very harmful to the natural environment. Many plants that are attractive in a garden are detrimental to natural areas, and can easily spread. Once established, invasive species are often very

difficult to control; they tend to take over natural areas and push out the existing native vegetation. Planting these species close to a natural area or dumping their clippings can have major ecological impacts. Please be aware of the plants that you are using in your garden. There are many attractive plants that are native to your area which make great substitutes for popular, but invasive, garden plants.

Here is a list of some of the main invasive offenders, as well as native alternatives that you could plant instead:

Invasive Species	Native Alternative
Norway Maple	Sugar Maple
Scots Pine	White Pine, Red Pine
Non-native Honeysuckle	Nannyberry, Elderberry, Any Native Dogwood
Burning Bush (European or Japanese Spindle Tree)	Serviceberry, Choke Cherry
Goutweed	Native Ferns, Trout Lily
Periwinkle or English Ivy	Virginia Creeper, Running Strawberry
Lily of the Valley or Day Lily	False Solomon's Seal, Trillium, Canada Mayflower
Dames Rocket	Brown-eyed Susan, Mayapple, Asters, Goldenrods



This colony of Dog-strangling Vine is highly invasive and is preventing native plants from growing



This native Trillium can be purchased at many local gardening stores and would make an excellent addition to a garden

We're happy to have you as a neighbour. With your help and understanding we can keep the Bruce Trail and Niagara Escarpment beautiful for many years to come!



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FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

The Bruce Trail Conservancy

P.O. Box 857, Hamilton, ON L8N 3N9

P: 905.529.6821 or 1.800.665.4453

F: 905.529.6823 E: info@brucetrail.org

Charitable Reg. No. 11921 7578 RR0001

www.brucetrail.org