

BRUCE TRAIL CONSERVANCY 50th Anniversary Celebrations

This past year – 2015 – was Year 4 of our 50th Anniversary Milestones project, and our year to put a spotlight on the Bruce Trail Conservancy's work in *Planning for our Future*.

In the Spring, Summer and Fall editions of the Bruce Trail Magazine we told you about the history of our organization in making bold plans in the 1960s to protect the Escarpment through establishment of the Bruce Trail, and how those plans were realized over the following decades. We wrote about the planning being done at the Provincial level, starting 50 years ago and leading right up to 2015 with the Province's Coordinated Review to assess land use plans for the Escarpment and other sensitive areas. And you didn't just read what we wrote – you acted! Scores of BTC members and volunteers made their voices known at Coordinated Review public meetings and through submissions to the Review panel. You told the panel that protecting the Niagara Escarpment, and ensuring the future of the Bruce Trail, was vital to the ecological, physical and social health of Southern Ontario.



**Bruce Trail
CONSERVANCY**



Photo: BTC Archives



Photo: BTC Archives

"The Bruce Trail changed my life. It lengthened my stride and gave joy to my heart."

Dr. Philip Gosling,
Volunteer Rally
June 9, 2012



Philip Gosling on the Bruce Trail in the 1960s

We also told you about the planning we do internally, from management plans for BTC properties, to implementation plans for key program areas that guide staff and volunteers on their operations, to strategic plans to ensure the best management of our finances and achievement of our organizational goals.

Planning is a vital element of what we do as an organization, and allows us to function as a viable and forward-thinking land trust. If it weren't for the plans and goals of more than 50 years ago the Bruce Trail would not exist, and preservation of the Niagara Escarpment would be a shadow of what it is today.

THE GOAL:

A corridor of protected land along the Niagara Escarpment

THE PLAN:

Build a footpath to show the public the need for Escarpment protection

The goal 50 years ago: a corridor of protected land along the Niagara Escarpment. The plan: build a footpath - a footpath that winds along the cliff lines, fencelines and shorelines of the Niagara Escarpment, which, with its beauty and allure, will draw people out into nature. Build a footpath to show people the importance of the Escarpment and how it needs protection. *What a great plan!* We are indebted to those early

Bruce Trail pioneers for putting such a bold plan into the hearts and minds of so many.

All that planning has meant great things for the Bruce Trail, the Niagara Escarpment and its conservation. More than 50 years later the Bruce Trail Conservancy is one of the most prominent and successful Land Trusts in the Province. We have been involved in the protection of 9,948 acres of Niagara Escarpment land worth over \$27 million. We have a beautiful Bruce Trail that is enjoyed by hundreds of thousands each year, young and old alike.

And what resources do we have to accomplish all that amazing work? We have dedicated members who spread the word about the BTC and the good things we offer. We have hard-working, fun-loving volunteers who help us from the Trail to the Boardroom. And we have committed donors who unfailingly support our work in land acquisition and conservation. Collectively your contributions as members, volunteers and donors – whichever category or categories most accurately describe your support – is vital to turning that plan of 50 years ago into a reality. However else could we have done it, if not for your gifts of time, talent and funds? It would not have been possible.

At the 2012 Volunteer Rally Dr. Philip Gosling, one of the pioneers involved in Bruce Trail planning, said: *"The Bruce Trail changed my life. It lengthened my stride and gave joy to my heart."* During this coming Year 5 of our Anniversary Milestones Project we want the whole Bruce Trail community to realize the importance of the Bruce Trail in their lives, and give them opportunities to deepen their commitment by lengthening their strides.