

Long Point Walsingham Forest

Ontario's Priority Place

Progress report to residents and visitors

The Long Point Walsingham Forest (LPWF) Priority Place was selected by Environment and Climate Change Canada in 2019 for its high biodiversity, large number of species at risk, highly-engaged local conservation community and significant environmental pressures.

The important objectives for this collaboration presented opportunities to protect and recover multiple terrestrial species at risk and their associated habitat.

In order to do this, coordinated, multi-partner conservation actions in this identified Community-Nominated Priority Place (CNPP) were implemented.

Following the concept outlined in the Pan-Canadian Approach to Transforming Species at Risk Conservation in Canada, a Collaborative of 18 local conservation organizations formed five working groups in 2019.

This Collaborative set priorities for improving biodiversity conservation, creating new partnerships, developing a Conservation Action Plan, seeking funding and implementing coordinated actions on-the-ground for species at risk and their habitat.

The five working groups are going into their 3rd year of work on habitat restorations in the Long Point Walsingham Forest Priority Place, and felt that it was important to share their results with Norfolk residents and visitors.

Road Ecology WORKING GROUP

The **Road Ecology** working group is comprised of road ecologists, conservation partners, local experts and community members dedicated to protecting biodiversity from the threats of roads.

The Group has evaluated where species at risk reptiles are most likely to cross roads in the Priority Place and is collaborating with Norfolk County to implement mitigation recommendations that combine stewardship, policy and signage such as Turtle and Snake crossing signs developed by the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO).

Signs mark known wildlife road mortality areas and alert motorists to drive cautiously and watch for wildlife to help avoid a collision.



MTO Wildlife Mortality Awareness signs that alert motorists to drive cautiously through known turtle or snake crossing areas.

The Group encourages residents, cottagers and visitors to learn more about road ecology and join the efforts to protect biodiversity from the threats of roads in Norfolk County by subscribing to: <https://wildlifeonroads.com/>

Have you observed wildlife on the road?

Please report your sighting here:

<https://inaturalist.ca/projects/wild-life-on-roads-in-ontario>



Long Point resident John Everett helping a Snapping Turtle off the road.

Photo credit: Jan Everett

Agricultural Runoff WORKING GROUP



photo courtesy of ALUS Norfolk

The **Agricultural Runoff** working group saw great progress with establishing projects in the 2021 field season.

The group is composed of partners from ALUS Norfolk, Norfolk County Drainage Services, the Long Point Region Conservation Authority, and Carolinian Canada.

Collaboratively, these partners established 145 acres of habitat restoration

and erosion control projects and 2,300 acres of cover crops, conserved 10 kms of drain corridors through modified practices, enhanced 15 km of drain buffers and promoted best management practices to 50 landowners.

This increase in permanent ground cover will help to anchor the soil and mitigate the impacts runoff can have on the landscape and associated waterways.

Invasive Control WORKING GROUP

In 2021 the Nature Conservancy of Canada with the help of its partners in the **Invasive Control working group** has been working to control invasive Phragmites in Norfolk County.

In the last year we have reached 42,000 people through news ads, 649 landowners with information mailouts, and contacted landowners to assess 230 parcels of land, with Phragmites management occurring on 39 parcels.

In collaboration with federal and

provincial organizations, private landowners, and local groups, we have come together to spray over 315 ha of Phragmites in Norfolk in 2021 and have cut or rolled large patches to restore critical habitat.

If you'd like to be part of our success in 2022, reach out to the Long Point Phragmites Action Alliance by visiting our website at longpointphragmites.ca or keep an ear out for this summer's communications to join the fight against Phragmites in Norfolk!



Open Country WORKING GROUP

Over the last year, the collaborative **Open Country** working group has focused on restoring Open Country habitats such as tallgrass prairie, oak savannah, and oak woodland; providing outreach opportunities to landowners and community members; species at risk monitoring; and breeding bird, insect, and vegetation surveys.

Restoration work such as prescribed burns, invasive plant removal, and direct seeding is being done to improve the condition of Open Country habitats in the LPWF and create more of it. Science and

monitoring work is being undertaken to better understand the species using these habitats and how restoration efforts are benefiting them. Some highlights over the last year include:

- A prescribed burn on the Nature Conservancy of Canada's Backus Block property to control undesirable invasive woody vegetation and promote the growth of native tallgrass prairie plants such as New Jersey Tea and big bluestem.

- Removal of non-native conifers and other invasive species in Long Point Basin Land Trust Nature Reserves and

the St. Williams Conservation Reserve to restore oak savannah habitats.

- Radio telemetry monitoring of species at risk snakes.



Photo courtesy: Isabella Brink Read

Forest & Treed Swamps WORKING GROUP

The **Forest and Treed Swamps** working group are working on a diverse array of projects to better improve habitat quantity and quality within the Long Point Walsingham Forest Priority Place. Invasive species removal and mitigation is being completed to re-naturalize forest habitats and improve overall forest health.

Habitat restoration is being instigated to preserve, and expand the extent of native and uncommon or rare ecosystems within the priority place. Avian surveys for forest bird species at risk are being completed

to monitor their population trends and ensure common native species populations are being maintained. Signage is being



Treed Swamp @Sean Jenniskens

placed in areas of sensitive habitat to deter human-related activities, which tend to damage the forest floor and treed wetlands, in order to better protect many sensitive ground-dwelling species. Tree planting is being done to create a better connectivity of forest habitats and create corridors for native wildlife. These activities will have a significant positive impact on improving and expanding native habitats and ecosystems, and adding overall native biodiversity to the forests and treed swamps of the Long Point Walsingham Forest Priority Place.