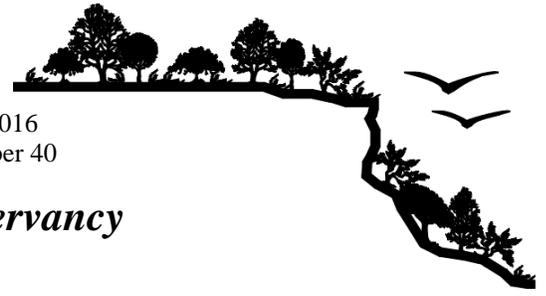


# Precipice

Fall 2016  
Number 40



*Newsletter of the Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy  
Protecting the Niagara Escarpment World Biosphere Reserve*

## Ottewell

- Richard and Barb Ottewell of Goderich have donated 2 reserves with 300 acres near Wiarton and Goderich.



This 200-acre property near Boat Lake on the Rankin River system has important wetlands and a significant forested area. We compiled a great long list of species here including some on the endangered, threatened and rare lists.



The second, 100-acre property is located on the Nine Mile River near Dungannon and contains a steep gorge. Richard and his family have done a great job stewarding these properties for many years. Thank you, Richard, for this great contribution to the protection of Southern Ontario.



The Ottewell Ashfield property, now an EBC reserve near Goderich.

# Now.... 153 reserves protected!

48  
sq. km.  
protected

## New Reserves:

Watts.....	32 ac	Page 2
Foster.....	50 ac	Page 3
VanHorne.....	175 ac	Page 6
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**52 Tracked Species** Ontario's NHIC, Natural Heritage Information Centre, tracks the provincial endangered, threatened, rare and species of special concern. We've been compiling EBC's contribution every time we inventory a new reserve. So far, we've actually found 52, including 7 endangered, 10 threatened and 17 of special concern. We hope to inventory a great many more next year. Let us know if YOU want to be part of a bioblitz day.

## Property Priorities

We are getting more and more opportunities to protect properties. Bob prepares a summary of the merits of each opportunity for our property committee (**Miriam, Malcolm, Thanushi and Roy**). We consider such factors as: priority focus, acreage, ecological significance, adjacency to protected areas, threats, reasons for property tax exemption and cost to conserve. We need your help to keep up with the number of opportunities. Mostly we work to receive land and agreement donations. Sometimes EBC's cost is as little as \$1,500 to receive 89 acres. More often, the \$5,000 cost of appraisals and legal fees will protect 100 acres worth \$200,000. That's a 40:1 return on your donation. After you get income tax savings you're protecting \$67 worth of land for every dollar you contribute. **Yes, your donations go a long way!** At the same time, you are protecting \$38 worth of ecosystem services every succeeding year with your one time donation. The services we get from nature include health, recreation, and control of climate change.

### Our next **EVENTS** are:

**Grey Bruce Farm Week, Elmwood, January 9.**  
**Grey Bruce Woodlot Assoc., Elmwood, April TBD**  
**Green Living Show** in Toronto at the Convention Centre on Front Street **April 7-9.**  
**Sources of Knowledge, Tobermory, April TBD**

**Dr. Michael Watts**, our friend and retired surgeon in Goderich has donated his 32-acre property with its beautiful old log house right on the shore of Lake Huron beside the airport. He and his partner, **Anne Cribben** have looked after this property and prevented development on seven lots overlooking the shore escarpment. Thank you!!!!



Watts shoreline and meadow

**Niagara Escarpment Views** features an article by **Bob Barnett** in each quarterly issue reaching 25,000 people along the Escarpment. Last issue featured Manitoulin Musings and the next issue will discuss how we hope to get more people visiting our reserves. Not only will visits improve their health, but they will better understand why EBC needs help protecting nature.

## EBC's New Direction

We want you to visit. See our web site for directions to our reserves. We will soon begin printing more detailed brochures welcoming you!



**Keep in touch** let us know if you want Precipice by email and/or want email updates every month.

## Stewardship.....a big change

After managing EBC's stewardship for the last three years, Bill McMartin has moved on to new challenges. Morgan Roblin has picked up where Bill left off. Several people like Gunter have offered to become regional stewards again. **Let us know if you would like to take a property under your wing and visit a few times a year to check there's no camping, hunting, cutting or grazing across the line.** We have a couple of transgressions right now. One landowner has cut 1400 trees in apparent breach of his conservation agreement and EBC is exploring a possible long-term encroachment on a newly acquired property. Given we have 153 nature reserves, these problems are fairly infrequent. You could be part of our species identification project. Typically we go out about six times a year on a mission to write down every species on a property. It's fun asking an expert like **Richard Aaron** what things are. **Let us know if you want to join us.**

## WWW.ESCARPMENT.CA

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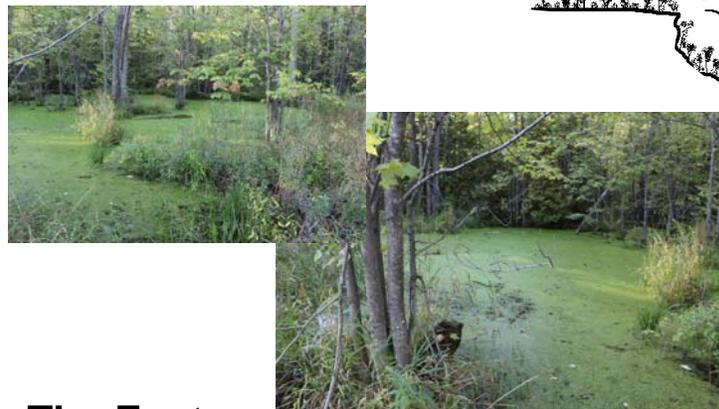
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Land Stewardship	Morgan Roblin	(416)-960-8121
Vice Chair	Saba Ahmad	(416)-580-4051
Treasurer	Tim Watson	(416)-960-8121
Freer Point	Roy Jeffery	(705)-368-3377
Alvar Bay	Catherine Lake	(416) 469-5815
Telecom	Anna Barnett	(416) 960-8121
Events	Morgan Roblin	(416)-960-8121

*The Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy is a registered charity whose mission is: a) To establish, maintain and manage a system of nature reserves in the area of the Niagara Escarpment (including the Niagara Escarpment World Biosphere Reserve), including the maintenance of physical features of scientific and/or ecological, cultural, historic or scenic interest; to maintain, enhance or restore areas of native species or natural habitat; and to encourage and support scientific research and educational services related thereto; and b) To educate the public about conservation and preservation of the landscape, ecology and wildlife of the Niagara Escarpment partly through providing low impact, ecologically sustainable recreational opportunities which complement and do not substantially conflict with this objective.*



**Butterfly Festival** Our festival went very well...we even had 15 Monarchs show up to be tagged. **Daryl Cowell** told us about our 440 million year-old shoreline and **Richard Aaron** held a great plant walk. **Toby's** bat watch went well before the rain, but Richard's moth event got too wet so we all went to bed. All the campers survived the huge rainstorm. Thanks to the **Park, Lenore, Audrey Armstrong** and all the volunteers for making all those kids who watched us tag Monarchs happy.



## Your new Board

Name	Occupation	Role	City
Saba Ahmad	lawyer	vice-chair	Toronto
Maryam Akrami	biologist	director	Toronto
Lada Alexychuk	artist	director	Toronto
Alex Cowan	tool and die	director	Toronto
Thanushi Eagalle	biologist	director	Guelph/BC
Marg Gaviller	school trustee	director	Owen Sound
Miriam Henriques	ret. educator	chair	Toronto
Roy Jeffery	doctor	director	Little Current
Catherine Lake	civil servant	secretary	Toronto
Karen MacDuffee	civil servant	director	Toronto
Malcolm Silver	ret.educator/admin	past chair	Toronto
Gunter Springer	ret. engineer	director	Chatsworth
Leah Stansbury	lawyer	director	Toronto
Sarah Thomson	publisher	director	Toronto
Tom Waechter	engineer	director	Richmond Hill
Robert Wilson	lawyer	director	Toronto
Linda Willson	ret. educator	director	Gore Bay

**Our AGM** was held again at Whole Village in Caledon. **Miriam Henriques, Saba Ahmad and Catherine Lake** stepped forward as our new officers. We thank **James Murdoch and Robb MacGuigan** for guiding us last year. Just to prove we are even more politically correct than **Justin Trudeau**, our board is now 64% female.

**Board Retreat** Eight members of the board got together at Kimbercote Farm for a chance to get to know each other better. **Saba** invited **Nancy Watt**, a trained facilitator. She got us going on Powerpoint Karioke where the individual has to weave a story around random images which pop up on the screen. **Morgan and Malcolm** proved up to the challenge. In another exercise, teams of two wove a story out of places and anecdotes. Later, we got onto a discussion about EBC. Probably the biggest challenge facing EBC is our need for fundraising. This will take the whole board team helping us make friends and bringing our supporters together. We will be working toward more time with our donors and supporters and more time in nature. We appreciate the time **Saba and Catherine** put in to make the event such a success. Your suggestions on getting EBC on a more secure financial footing would help. Just give one of us a call.

## The Foster

**Family** has donated 50 acres of Niagara Escarpment wetland just south of Woodford. The third generation, **Alex and Leslie**, wish to remember the contribution of grandfather **George Wilmer Foster** and father **George Allan Foster** who protected this land for so many years as part of their interest in biology and protection of the Niagara Escarpment. This will be one of our less-visited reserves as it is 3/4 surrounded by a creek, most of it is wetland and the only access is by a long walk around the edge from the road allowance on the south boundary. One job for next year is a thorough biological inventory.

**Let us know if you'd like to join us for a bioblitz.**



**Jarmo Jalava** at Alvar Bay.....looking

## Bill Murdoch

Bill has now retired as MPP for Grey Bruce, Owen Sound, but has kept up his usual hectic pace in local affairs. He hosts a regular radio show in Owen Sound. He suggested that **Gunter Springer** and I talk about conservation potential on May 30. We had fun responding to the questions....many about the Trails Act. Several suggestions for land conservation arose. One 254-acre wetland protection seems likely this year. Bill introduced us to **Arnie Clark and Outdoors Adventures**. They are now helping to improve wildlife habitat and build trails on our land near Owen Sound.

**Fall Fairs** We attended the fall fairs at Meaford, Thornbury, Chatsworth and Port Elgin. Each was different, but all were a success. Gord Edwards donated full skunk and deer skulls to add to our collection and get the kids talking. **Art Wiebe and Bill Moses** helped us at Pumpkinfest as that overlapped with our board retreat. We're looking forward to following up with everyone who discussed conservation issues.

**Extraordinary Trees** Gord Edwards and his friends are hosting a series of lectures at Grey Roots. The speakers sound pretty interesting. EBC will be there November 1, 22 and 29. I hope you can join us. The first sessions have been very successful.

**Greenbelt** The Greenbelt Plan is up for review. Many in the development community hope it gets smaller while there is pressure from others to expand it. The area covered by the Niagara Escarpment Plan could be expanded if the current recommendations are accepted. We heard many times at the Fall Fairs that an expansion would be unpopular. Certainly most of us hope that the Niagara Escarpment Plan and Commission be strengthened, not weakened or amalgamated. This could be an opportunity for government to take conservation seriously. We recently sent our submission to the plan review team. We also recommended that the Environmental Commissioner study the subject of conservation consistent with Ontario's Biodiversity Initiative. The next few months could make a big difference. Let's hope it's good.

Richard Aaron, Morgan, Adam Mohammed, Leonard and Gunter Springer at Gunter's Spey Wetlands



**Government Relations** has been at the front of EBC's agenda as we struggle for provincial funding, representation in the cap and trade system and reduced taxes for landowners with conservation agreements. To this end we've met with **Premier Wynne**, twice, **Minister McGarry**, **Michelle Baker** in the Premier's office and **David Clarke** in Finance. Next is a meeting with Peter Rankin in Minister McGarry's office. We thank **Dan O'Reilly and Saba Ahmad** for setting up meetings with their MPP or MP. **Please help us meet with your MPP to encourage them to protect nature by helping land trusts.**

## Allan Stone

I am sad to report that Dr. Allan Stone died suddenly on July 28<sup>th</sup>. You may not recognize his name....he always kept a low profile. **Mac Kirk**, our former director introduced us. Allan was there when we started the Conservancy. I remember him coming to a meeting in Owen Sound when EBC was pretty much just an idea. With his partner, **Susan Gibson**, his Lichen Foundation gave us one of our first grants.

Allan and Susan knew how important the Huron shore is up near Tobermory. They suggested that we acquire the Davis property and funded our efforts in 2001. For its 4.6-acre size it is a real treasure trove with ancient cedars and alvar shoreline. Susan and I discovered a Queen Snake on the property. It was considered extirpated on the Northern Bruce, but now more have been discovered nearby. That was our first project on the Huron shore.

Later, the Lichen Foundation funded many other acquisitions including Alvar Bay, Barney Lake and Sadler Creek. That allowed us to acquire a 1,500-acre base on the Peninsula with about 3 kilometres of shoreline. At the time, Ontario Nature had one reserve on Cape Hurd as did Ontario Heritage Trust. Now Nature Conservancy has joined the effort and there are 16 reserves protected at Cape Hurd alone.

I remember visiting Sadler Creek with Allan and Susan. We crossed the creek on piggy back. I remember getting in to Manitoulin's Dewar reserves with them. It was after a big flood and we were all soaked by the time we got out. Around this time they funded the definitive "Lichens of Ontario" book.

In those days I was driving my 12-year-old Taurus with a huge crack all the way across the windshield. Allan and Susan suggested they get me a new car. When the old car actually wouldn't drive any more they got me a new Subaru so the acquisition process would be more effective. I drove that car for 434,000 km and created about a hundred new reserves behind its wheel.

Allan will be greatly missed. He was one of a few amazing people who make a big difference.

### Invest in nature.

**Every \$1 invested as an EBC donation returns \$18 every year by** protecting nature's services like air and water cleaning and the tourism, recreation and education nature brings. We hope investors will take a small fraction (say, 5%) of their investment returns and use it to protect nature. That helps everyone in the community. We call such donations for nature "Nature's Benefit Fund". This could be a great way to "Green" your portfolio.



## Current Projects

**Near Guelph:** An 85-acre farm agreement along the Speed River

**Near Rockford:** a 100-acre agreement with Spey River wetland

**Near Tara:** a 100-acre farm agreement

**Near Warton:** a 300-acre agreement with forest and wetland

**Near Warton:** 254 acres of wetland adjacent to 250 acres already protected. A huge protected area!

**Near Rocklyn:** 120 acres of wetland and newly planted forest.

**Near Heathcote:** 70 acres of Niagara Escarpment.

**Helen Brink** We are sorry to report that Helen Brink died a mere two months after completing her conservation agreement with EBC. Our condolences to the entire family. Her son, **Nick**, will now be taking title to the property including the log cabin we featured in the last issue.



**Ontario Land Trust Alliance** held its annual gathering in Orillia. It was well-attended by Ontario's 40 land trusts plus representatives from Quebec, New Brunswick and Alberta as we try to rebuild the Canadian Land Trust Alliance. The featured speakers were **John Lounds** of Nature Conservancy and **Dianne Saxe**, Ontario's Environmental Commissioner. Unfortunately, there were no reps from Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. Our federal EcoGift reps played a big role as usual. From the US, we had reps from American Friends and the Conservation Fund. Bob and our chair, **Miriam Henriques** attended from EBC. EBC presented motions encouraging two-way communication with OLTA's board and that OLTA member groups work with OLTA on government relations. Neither motion was supported by OLTA members.



**Facebook** EBC has reached almost 800 "friends" thanks to a great effort by **Morgan Roblin** to keep our site current. Get regular updates. Visit us at [Facebook.com/EscarpmentBiosphereConservancy](https://www.facebook.com/EscarpmentBiosphereConservancy)

**STEWARDSHIP** As a land trust, EBC has made a commitment to be the perpetual stewards of the lands we protect. In our case that means 153 nature reserves on almost 12,000 acres of land scattered throughout Southern Ontario. EBC relies on our supporters who volunteer their time as *Property Stewards*. Volunteers explore nature reserves in their neighbourhood. During these adventures, they look for potential hazards and issues associated with the land. This includes cleaning up garbage, maintaining trails, and recording evidence of trespassing. Many volunteers record species observations during their visit often creating new records for EBC!

We are always looking for supporters to help us uphold our commitment to stewardship. Next season, we want volunteers to help coordinate stewardship activities as *Regional Coordinators*. In this position, you will oversee volunteers at a county or municipal scale. It will be your responsibility to ensure that all properties in your region are visited. **If this interests you, please contact Morgan Roblin ([morganrobin@gmail.com](mailto:morganrobin@gmail.com)).**

*"I have been a land steward for the Nature Conservancy of Canada and the Bruce Trail Conservancy for many years. Recently I added EBC to that list. Some EBC properties are remote and rugged and thus are more challenging to visit. This adds some spice to the equation! Rather than a visit to an old friend, it is more of a trek into the unknown. I would be glad to take someone out for the day just to see what it is all about."*

Bill Moses, EBC Property Steward

Stewardship sometimes requires more than our standard monitoring visits. We must understand the species and systems on our properties to guide stewardship actions and set priorities. This year, EBC partnered with the Ontario Land Trust Alliance (OLTA). We received funding from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry's Species at Risk Stewardship Fund. This grant allowed us to conduct targeted species at risk inventories on our nature reserves. We made new observations and updated previous records. Observations included: Hill's Thistle, Dwarf Lake Iris, Massassauga Rattlesnake, and many bat species! We are applying for funding again for next season so wish us luck!

**We need Trail Builders....call Bob**

**Doug VanHorne** has donated an agreement to protect his 175-acre property from development. Right on County Road 40, east of Chatsworth, he's got great features like a big waterfall on a Bighead River tributary, Niagara Escarpment outcrops, and a significant wetland with springs feeding the Bighead. Immediately south is the Hamill reserve protecting the same wetland, so they have protected 275 acres overall. Doug has planted many thousands of trees and continues to farm a small portion with consideration for Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark habitat. We thank Doug for this generous donation. We also thank the donor who covered half of EBC's costs and the other donors who put money in the jar to cover the rest.



**Any Time: Visit an EBC reserve,** just call us for directions or visit the web site. Help us list the birds and plants found there. Get the kids out on a scavenger hunt, bring your camera.



**An amazing Year-end** EBC is starting three intensive months with our eye on the goal of protecting more than 1,000 acres. You'll see the list on page 5. One project is a 300-acre conservation agreement right beside 200 acres we were given by **Richard Ottewell**. A second project will see EBC owning 254 new acres of provincially significant wetland. And that is right beside **Gord Edward's** 250-acre Lindenwood agreement. In both areas we will have 500 acre (2 sq km) blocks of land protected. Add to that new 500 acres the 120 acre reserve near Rocklyn, the 100-acre agreement near Rockford, 70 new acres near Heathcote, an 85-acre agreement near Guelph and 42 acres near Pike Bay. We may have to struggle to get the new 100-acre agreement completed in 2016 near Tara.

"We are working to protect Ontario's rich biodiversity for future generations"  
Minister of MNRF

"You will continue to work with other ministers and partners to advance measures aimed at further strengthening and protecting Ontario's biodiversity"  
Kathleen Wynne, Premier  
(to Kathryn McGarry, MNRF)

Each of these projects costs us money for appraisals and legal work. Every dollar spent protects \$18 of the ecosystem services we depend on. We are asking Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry for only 1 cent per resident of Ontario per year to help with these costs .  
**Could you contact your MPP and ask their help? Let's meet them together.**