

**NIAGARA
ESCARPMENT
Views**

Winter 2014–15 (December, January, February)

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Mike Davis

HOMES!

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Publications Mail #41592022

View of Land Conservation: 15 new reserves!

by Bob Barnett

It has been quite a year. We were invited to Mattawa to look at a property. There was no local organization willing to conserve 403 acres. Spectacular: a 65-foot waterfall and a 50-inch-diameter old white pine, one of many old-growth trees, and a high granite cliff. The list of species is as long as your arm. So we helped the Peavoy family place a conservation agreement on it. Now the Ministry of Transportation wants to put a new Mattawa bypass right through it. We may be in for a fight, but they'll need permission from Ontario's Minister of Natural Resources and Environment Canada to proceed.

Then there is the 100-foot-high cliff on John Thomson's donation at Mallory Beach. And the waterfall on Lorie Waisberg's property near Woodford and the one km

of Bruce Trail near Ravenna. The Toronto Wildlife Centre has protected their 82-acre property east of Meaford with the Clay Banks looming over Georgian Bay and Workman's Creek which has eaten its way through 40 feet of solid limestone as it tumbles down the Ordovician Escarpment.

But there are lots more projects. Doug Dingeldein and Peggy have protected their 200-acre share of the Osprey Wetlands near Singhampton. Peter Foley and Noreen have protected their 62 acres on the west bank of the Beaver Valley, formerly a ski slope. The Matthews have protected a big chunk of Deer Creek, a Saugeen Tributary near Chesley.

Gunter Springer is creating his 10th reserve on Negro Creek Road near Holland Centre while Heather Thornton has protected a 70-acre wetland near the Saugeen near Durham. I just got a listing of species from Jarmo Jalava's new reserve on Manitoulin's south shore. It includes 33 of Ontario's priority bird species.

The Ralph family donated an island in Eagle Harbour, Veronika Bingaman gave us 30 acres of Manitoulin's Escarpment right on the Bingaman Trail, Chris Peabody gave us 85 acres of Escarpment near Kemble, and the Stephens family donated 45 acres in Glencairn on the Ganaraska Trail.

What gives? Well, lots of families want to protect their land through the next generation and worry that Ontario from south of the Canadian Shield is only 4.3 per cent protected, not the 17 per cent agreed by 168 countries including Canada and the province of Ontario.

◀ A 100-ft-high cliff at Mallory Beach, part of John Thomson's land.



▲ Jarmo Jalava's new reserve on the south shore of Manitoulin Island protects 33 of Ontario's priority bird species.

Join us on our quest to protect the land we love. Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy is negotiating to buy the 50-acre property surrounded by our Alvar Bay Reserve. That's the same place I saw male rattlesnakes bashing away at each other for the favour of the female. We learned about the Massasaga dominance dance from Tony Edwards of Bruce Peninsula National Park in the morning during a snake walk – and saw it in the afternoon on our own reserve. Now that is extraordinary! It's also the place where migratory birds visit every spring and fall and which has even more birds than nearby Cabot Head, designated an Important Bird Area.

Gift Certificates

Consider donating \$100 as a gift for Christmas: you will get a certificate in the name of your friend or relative

acknowledging that they have protected 2,904 square feet of this remarkable place.

And think of the 20 members of Tina Ruhl's family with her husband David Martin who joined us to celebrate the reserve named in Tina's honour, just west of Duntroon and right on the Bruce Trail. David donated their joint insurance policy, a huge help to EBC at some time long into the future. We celebrated on October 18 in the pouring rain with champagne and the erection of a commemorative sign naming the reserve after Tina.

Please visit our reserves. Pictures and directions will be on our website www.escarpment.ca. **NEV**

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