Caring for Nature in Norfolk

Landowner Action in Carolinian Canada

Farmers and the Land

The fertile farmlands on the sand plains of Norfolk County are ideal for producing a vast array of crops, including fruits and vegetables, corn and soybeans, and various speciality crops like tobacco, ginseng, shiitake mushrooms and peanuts. Our moderate climate provides long growing seasons and relatively mild winters and, in most years, adequate rainfall. The relationship between farmers and the land is deep – after all farm families live on the land and make their living from the land. At times farmers have to battle nature – as when insects attack crops, or deer and raccoons feed on the fruits of long labour. But farmers also have the chance to experience nature's beauty everyday– a fox running across a farm lane early in the morning, Tundra Swans flying overhead, a flock of a Wild Turkeys on a field edge, a mother bird feeding its young at her nest in an apple orchard. This puts farmers in a very special role of being the stewards of our land.

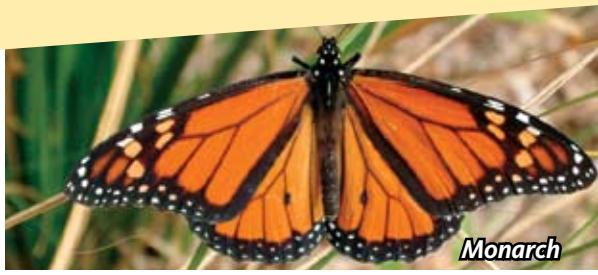


The Carolinian Life Zone stands out as one of Canada's natural treasures. The Tulip Tree leaf is a symbol of many unique wild plants and animals that live here.

Caring For Nature factsheet series is published by the Carolinian Canada Coalition
www.carolinian.org • 519-433-7077

The Unique Nature *of* Norfolk County

Norfolk County lies in the heart of Carolinian Canada and boasts some of the highest ecological diversity of animals, plants and natural habitats in Canada. Amidst fertile agricultural fields, rural hamlets and towns, and industrial sites, Norfolk has the highest percentage of forested land in Southwestern Ontario (estimated at around 27%). These forests include provincial parks, conservation areas, a world biosphere reserve, and other protected areas, as well as a significant acreage of private woodlots. Our woodlands contain unique Carolinian species like the Southern Flying Squirrel, Red-headed Woodpecker and Tulip Tree; our streams and rivers are rich in fish, including Brook and Rainbow Trout; our wetlands support countless species of aquatic insects, amphibians, birds and plants; and our remnants of native prairie and savannah are home to the endangered American Badger and Wild Lupine.



Monarch

Linking Norfolk to a Green Future

Over 160 ha (400 ac) of trees have been planted in Norfolk thanks to a unique local partnership between landowners, industry and conservation groups. In 1997, the L**ong Point World Biosphere Reserve Foundation** initiated the *Forest Corridor Project* to improve links between natural areas. As a result, the partners are growing healthy landscapes for Norfolk and bringing many benefits to local communities such as improved water and air quality, enhanced wildlife habitat and protected farm productivity. By retiring fragile agricultural lands, sheltering adjacent farm fields and restoring natural habitat, the program has been immensely successful. Through the partnership, **Long Point Region Conservation Authority** provides technical advice and cost-efficient planting services to landowners. **Ontario Power Generation** provides funding through its *Carbon Sequestration / Biodiversity Monitoring Project* that is committed to planting 1.6 million trees to address global climate change and conserve natural biodiversity.



Tree Planting & Habitat Restoration

© Brian Craig

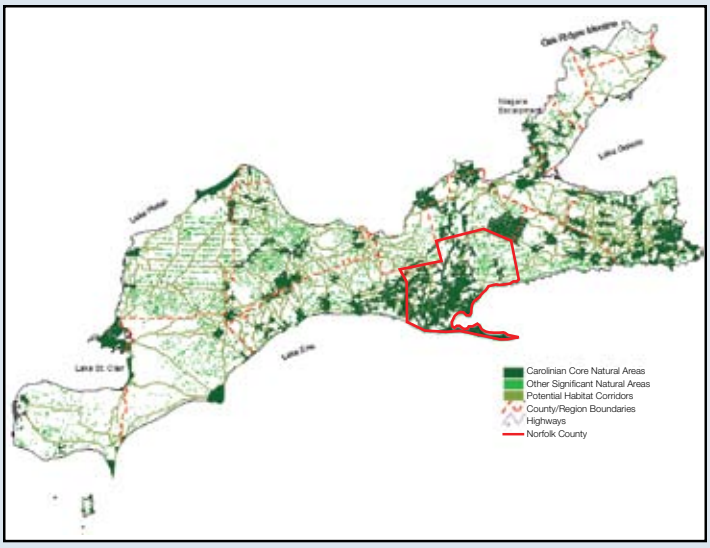
Cool Grass Meadow Habitat

© EarthTramper Consulting Inc.

The Big Picture in Norfolk

Landscapes need large core habitats connected by natural corridors to sustain healthy wild and human communities. The *Big Picture* is the **Carolinian Canada Coalition's** vision of a network of green managed in harmony with working landscapes. It shows how existing natural areas can be enhanced and linked with habitat restoration and natural regeneration over time. The *Big Picture* was developed by a team of habitat experts using years of field data and state-of-the-art mapping systems.

The *Big Picture* includes 140 core habitats, the best natural areas on the Carolinian landscape. Eleven are found in Norfolk, including the United Nations Long Point Biosphere Reserve, and example of world-class heritage. A wide range of groups and municipalities use the *Big Picture* as guide to protect watersheds, landscapes and ecosystems.



Landowners in the Big Picture

Many landowners are growing a green and healthy future for Norfolk. Less than 1% of Carolinian Canada is protected in parks, such as Turkey Point, St. William's Forest and Backus Woods. This means that private landowners are important stewards of Big Picture habitats. They are planting buffers, windbreaks, hedgerows, trees and prairie; using sound forestry practices and minimizing contamination of the water and air of Norfolk to enhance the environment for all life here.

Our Wild Neighbours

Comprised of forests, wetlands, meadows, prairie and savanna, Norfolk is home to an amazingly diverse number of plants and animals. In fact, in Carolinian Canada, there are over 70 native trees, 2,200 plants and more than half of all Canadian birds.
Some Carolinian Plants and Animals found in Norfolk:

Ground plants:
American Ginseng*
Dwarf Blazing Star
Butterflyweed
Birds-foot Violet*
Switchgrass
Little Bluestem

Shrubs:
Hazelnut
Spicebush
Burning Bush
Prairie Rose

Trees:
Tulip Tree*
American Chestnut*
Eastern Flowering Dogwood*
Black Walnut
Dwarf Chinquipin Oak*
Cucumber Magnolia
Black Gum

Reptiles & Amphibians:
Fowler's Toad*
Jefferson Salamander*
Gray Rat Snake*
Spotted Turtle*

Mammals:
Virginia Oppossum
American Badger*
White-tailed Deer
Hoary Bat

Birds:
Prothonotary Warbler*
Acadian Flycatcher*
Bald Eagle*
Red-bellied Woodpecker

Insects:
Regal Fritillary
Southern Wood Katydid
Spicebush Swallowtail

** Rare species*





Visit www.carolinian.org to zoom in on any part of the Big Picture and find out more about habitat cores and corridors in your area.

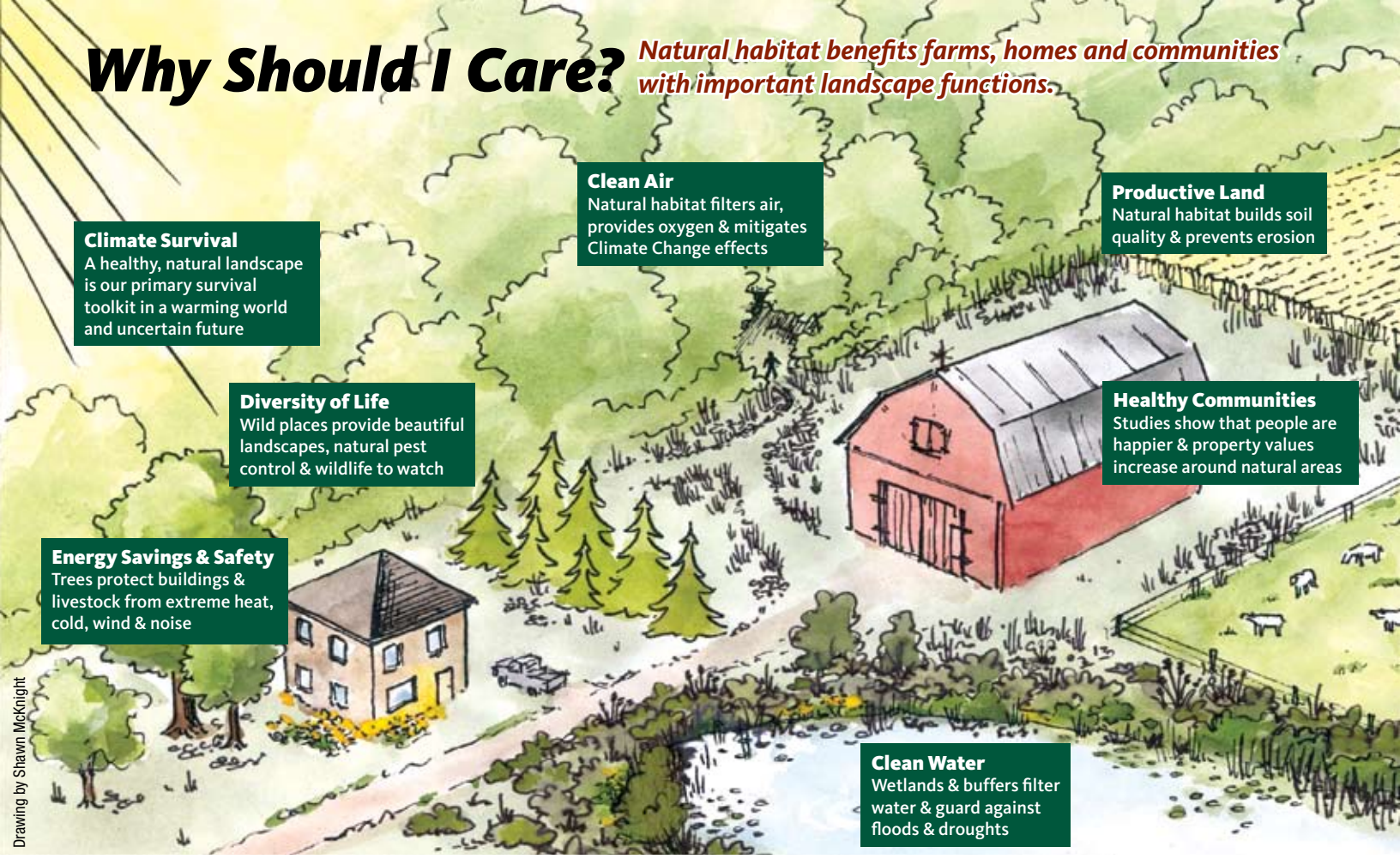
Every Bit Helps!



Healthy landscapes are created by many people working together for the same goal. The Big Picture is enhanced by even the smallest conservation action. As more landowners get involved in stewardship, who knows? Perhaps that acre that you restored years ago will become a part of a healthy habitat network as our Big Picture landscape evolves. Every natural area is important and we can, as a community, work together to create a network of green that will be a healthy and functioning place to live now, and into the future. You don't need a large property to help out. Backyard, community and schoolyard naturalization projects play an important ecological and educational role. Many native plant species that are important food sources for birds and butterflies also produce brilliant flowers that are enjoyed by people.

Why Should I Care?

Natural habitat benefits farms, homes and communities with important landscape functions.



Drawing by Shawn McKnight

What Can I Do?

Not sure where to start? Contact a conservation partner listed in this factsheet to discuss habitat options on your land or in your community.

Manage for Sustainable Income

If you depend on your land for a livelihood, your forest can provide you with a good long-term income if harvested properly and will also provide wildlife habitat. For example, leave mature seed trees scattered through your woods to sustain its genetic richness.

Natural Homes

Wildlife shelter includes leaf litter, gnarled branches, old logs, brush piles, wet meadows, tall grass, marshes, swamps and more. Resist the desire to 'clean up' a habitat. You may find a Southern Flying Squirrel in a standing dead tree or a salamander under a log.

Protect Your Water

Protect your lake or stream shoreline with native vegetation. Natural buffers filter sediments and pollution. Roots of plants stabilize the soil to prevent erosion and reduce flood impacts. The wider the buffer the greater the benefits.

Let it Get Old

Make a decision to protect at least one area from disturbance. This may be a swamp, forest interior or old field. You will be rewarded with increasing diversity of plants and animals that need 'quiet' habitat.

Nesting Time

Avoid active management during spring, an important time for wildlife, especially birds. For example, if you confine timber harvesting to winter and leave a few rotting trees in a swamp, you may provide a home for the endangered Prothonotary Warbler.

Help bring Balance to the Landscape

Non-native plant and animal species are wreaking havoc with our natural ecosystems. As well, nuisance wildlife, such as deer, racoons and geese, proliferate in cultivated landscapes, damaging farm fields and natural habitats. Repellents, controlled hunting and natural predators such as coyotes, hawks and snakes can help.

Make Connections

Restore habitat along roads, watercourses, drains, shorelines, fences, hedgerows and on marginal land or marshy ground. Work with neighbours to connect green corridors.

Think Big

A major problem in Carolinian Canada is fragmented habitat that is prone to losing rare species. If you want to create new habitat, consider adding to existing natural areas to multiply their benefits.

Plan it Right for Love and Money

Consult an ecologist or forester to develop a plan for your property that will help reach your goals. With a plan, you may be eligible for a variety of conservation grants and incentives.

Enjoy & Relax

As you get to know your land in all seasons, you will know best what it needs to stay healthy. You may decide to leave it alone to make a significant contribution to the future of your land, your heritage and your community. You can get involved in programs such as the Canadian Wildlife Service's Backyard Frog Count to contribute to science and learn more about your land.

The Natural Wonders of Norfolk

Walsingham Business Leads the Way


Peter Carson & Mary Gartshore

While fostering a unique business, Peter Carson and Mary Gartshore have become recognized experts in protecting and enhancing natural habitats in Norfolk and beyond. They operate **Pterophylla**, a native plant nursery on an 80 ha (200 ac) former tobacco farm near Walsingham. From here, they assist hundreds of habitat projects across southern Ontario, provide educational tours and host university biodiversity researchers. Knowing that the Norfolk forests are a gem of the Carolinian Life Zone, they volunteer locally to purchase and restore natural habitat in partnership with landowners, the **Norfolk Field Naturalists**, **Long Point Basin Land Trust** and others including a 160 ha (400 ac) project linking significant natural areas. Some of their exciting finds of rare species in Norfolk are Tulip-tree Silk Moth, Robust Conehead Katydid, Eastern Hognosed Snake and Prairie Warbler.

Extreme Nature in Norfolk

From towering 600 year old forests to expansive coastal wetlands, Norfolk is recognized internationally for its unique natural ecosystems, thanks to generations of landowners with foresight. Since 1798, the Backhouse family preserved the giants of the Carolinian forest so now you can walk among 30 m (100 ft) Tulip Trees at **Backus Conservation Area**. The **Long Point Basin Land Trust** stewards the spectacular Jackson-Gunn Old Growth Forest, where giant tree hollows provide a winter haven for Carolina Wren and Eastern Pipistrelle Bat. Today, landowners are choosing to leave pockets of woodland undisturbed to restore the magnificent forests of southwestern Ontario for the future.


Jackson-Gunn Old Growth Forest

© David Agro

YU Ranch Raises Eco-friendly Profits

Norfolk farmer Bryan Gilvesy, planted a 3.2 ha (8 ac) tallgrass prairie pasture on his YU Ranch south of Courtland. Raising hormone-free and Local Food Plus certified Texas long-horn cattle on his ranch, Bryan plans that the prairie pasture, consisting of native switchgrass, Indian grass and big bluestem, will provide good grazing opportunities for his cattle in dry summers, when traditional pastures stop growing. Bryan has also provided solar-powered watering for his cattle to fence off significant woodlands containing an important water supply for his farm and a trout stream; and planted switchgrass hedge rows for wind erosion control. The project is a joint effort with the **Long Point Region Conservation Authority, Pterophylla Native Plants and Seeds, the Norfolk Federation of Agriculture and the Norfolk Land Stewardship Council.**


Tallgrass Pasture

© NLSC


Texas Longhorns

© NLSC

These folks and other neighbours too numerous to mention are quietly helping to restore our landscape, to protect rare wildlife, and to make your home a safer place to live by keeping the air and water clean. You can help too, in many ways.

Explore Carolinian Canada on your Doorstep



Flowering Dogwood

Rowanwood Sanctuary is a local natural paradise that shows off the broad range of habitat types characteristic of properties in Carolinian Canada. From floodplain and wet meadow, to grassland and mature Carolinian forest, each habitat provides critical food and shelter for native wildlife including migrating waterfowl, warblers, woodpeckers, fascinating insects, beautiful spring flowers and unique trees. The conifer plantations are being actively managed to encourage the growth of hardwood seedlings on the forest floor to enhance the site's natural diversity. Rowanwood is owned by the **Ontario Heritage Trust** and managed by the **Norfolk Field Naturalists**.

Champions for Trees

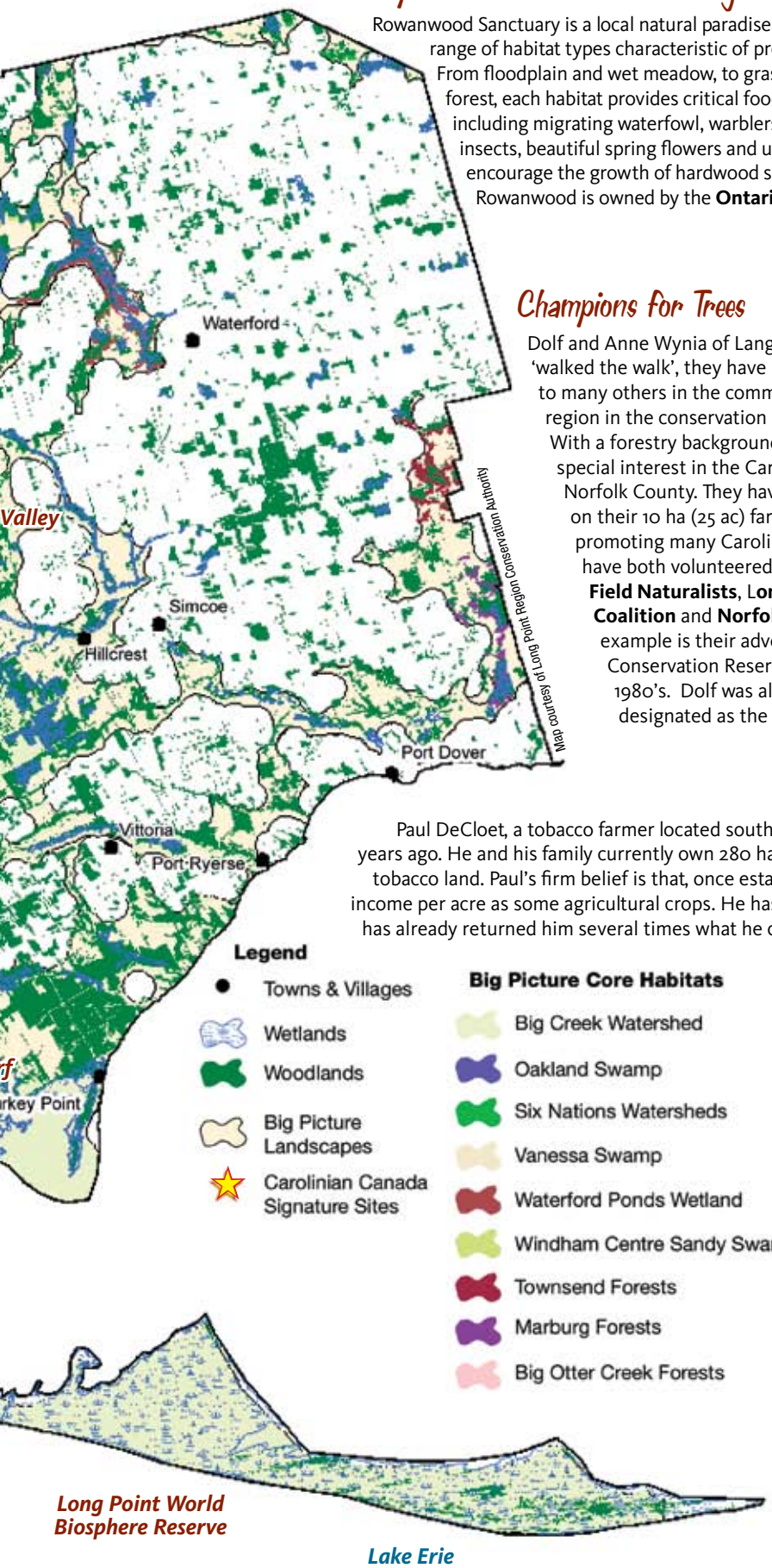


Dolf and Anne Wynia of Langton have not only 'walked the walk', they have been an inspiration to many others in the community and across the region in the conservation of forested lands. With a forestry background, they have taken a special interest in the Carolinian woodlands of Norfolk County. They have restored habitat on their 10 ha (25 ac) farm, planting and promoting many Carolinian tree species. Dolf and Anne have both volunteered extensively for many years with groups such as the **Norfolk Field Naturalists**, L**ong Point Region Conservation Authority**, **Carolinian Canada Coalition** and **Norfolk Land Stewardship Council**. One notable example is their advocacy for the stewardship of the St. Williams Conservation Reserve, for which Dolf was as Superintendent in the 1980's. Dolf was also the driving force in getting Norfolk County designated as the *Forest Capital of Canada* in 2008.

Sustainable Forests, Sustainable Economics

Paul DeCloet, a tobacco farmer located south of Tillsonburg, began diversifying into timber production over 25 years ago. He and his family currently own 280 ha (700 ac) of woodlots, some original and some established on old tobacco land. Paul's firm belief is that, once established, a well-managed hardwood woodlot can produce as much income per acre as some agricultural crops. He has proven this with a 25 ha (62 ac) woodlot, purchased in 1980, that has already returned him several times what he originally paid for the property. He carefully harvests his woodlots on a rotational basis, taking 5 to 6 trees out of one spot and creating sunny openings so tree seedlings can thrive. This practice of natural regeneration has worked well in establishing small stands of Tulip Tree, Black Gum, Sassafras, and other Carolinian species. Currently a trustee with the **Trees Ontario Foundation**, Paul is a recipient of the Ontario Forestry Foundation's Tree Farmer Award in recognition of his innovative forestry techniques.





Explore more habitat projects and ideas in Carolinian Canada's Big Picture Network at www.carolinian.org

Trees Make a World of Difference

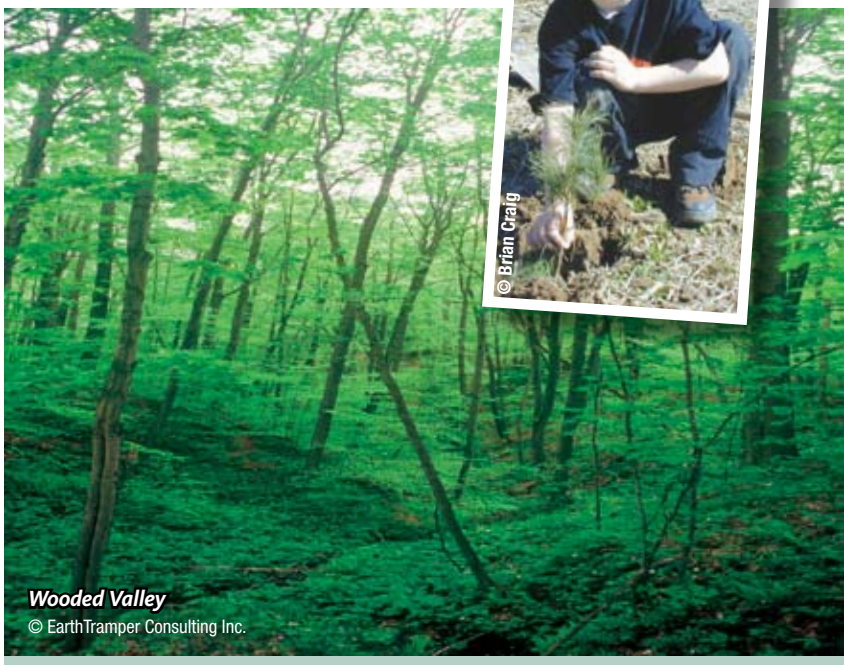
Sustainable forest management, whether or not you intend to do any logging, is important to maintaining the health of your woodland.

Some woodlot owners like their woods just the way they are - maybe an area to enjoy nature, hike, cross-country ski, snowshoe, hunt, or harvest maple sap with their children. Others may want to realize some economic gain through selective and careful timber removal. Some shy away from a timber harvest in their woodlot while others look strictly at the economics without regard to woodlot health. Proper and sustainable forest management, whether or not you intend to do any logging, is important to maintaining the health of your woodlot.

Healthy Woodland Guidelines for the Private Landowner

The following is a 5-point conservation plan for your woodlot:

1. Join the [county] Woodlot Association to network and learn from fellow landowners and invited speakers.
2. Know your woodlot. Hike it in different seasons and observe the many species of plants and animals. Perhaps you will find some of the Carolinian species unique to our part of Ontario (see Resources section for more information).
3. Invite a naturalist or ecologist to your woodlot to help you learn more about the species on your property. They can also help you identify rare plants and animals (Species at Risk), "old growth" forest and other important habitat for wildlife.
4. Develop an integrated management plan for your woodlot – strive to balance economic gain with recreational opportunities, environmental impacts and aesthetics. As an option, hire a professional forest manager to help you develop your management plan.
5. Apply to the Managed Forest or Conservation Land Tax Incentive Programs. You may be eligible to receive property tax credits.



Wooded Valley
© EarthTramper Consulting Inc.

Sustainable Harvesting

If you've decided to log your woodlot, ensure that each tree to be removed is carefully identified and marked in a selective harvest, ensuring minimal impact on wildlife, wildlife habitat, and forest productivity. The following are some common sense guidelines:

1. Contract a certified tree marker to select the trees to be removed. Make sure your choice of tree marker understands the value of conserving Carolinian species and habitat (e.g. rare tree species, snags and cavity trees for wildlife, trees with active raptor nests).
2. Select a logger, through a competitive bidding process, who demonstrates a strong commitment to sustainable forestry practices. Before accepting an offer visit properties that the logger has recently harvested and talk to the landowners.
3. Ensure there is a written contract in place, which incorporates your integrated management plan, before any logging begins.
4. Visually inspect, on a regular basis, your woodlot that is being logged. Don't be afraid to ask questions or stop the harvest if you have concerns.
5. After the harvest, implement further improvements as identified in your woodlot management plan (e.g. protect sensitive areas, replant, create wildlife habitat, improve trails).

Norfolk Woodlot Owners Save Local Hoodies

The threatened Hooded Warbler is recovering faster than any other species at risk in Canada, thanks to local private woodlot owners. Norfolk landowners have benefited from research by the **Ministry of Natural Resources** in local woodlots, including Walsingham Forest, the St. Williams Conservation Reserve forest and private woodlots, that started a trend in sustainable woodlot management. The research showed that the *Hoodies*, as they are affectionately known here, need forest canopy gaps and understory vegetation in deep woods or interior forest habitat (100 m in). With this new knowledge, local landowners volunteered to create small forest openings during planned selective harvests. This strategy has little effect on income but is having a big effect on the *Hoodies*. As a result, the population of Hooded Warblers has been increasing in Norfolk over the last few years, based on surveys conducted by **Bird Studies Canada**. Now, local landowners have another reason to enjoy their woodlands.



Hooded Warbler



Two Hooded Warblers adorn Norfolk County's coat of arms

THE PRIDE OF NORFOLK

Landowners Help Rare Species

Many landowners in Norfolk are saving habitat, helping Species at Risk and protecting a rare piece of Norfolk heritage at the same time. Whether you are a rural or urban dweller, you can enjoy a diversity of wild and beneficial neighbours once you give them a little space.

What are They?

Species at risk are plants or animals in danger of disappearing from the wild. Over 72 Norfolk species are nationally protected and 248 are rare in Ontario, among the highest levels in the nation. Local recovery teams are working with experts and community members to protect critically rare species, habitats and landscapes that support them. Given the high concentration of species at risk in Carolinian Canada, ecologists recommend that the best way to protect our rare wild neighbours is to focus on their habitats.



Prothonotary Warbler

Rare Gems of Nature Close at Hand

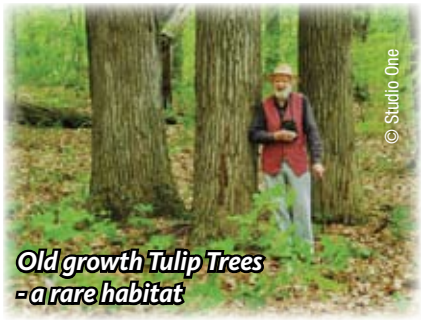
Many fascinating and rare wild neighbours are found in here. Rare animals include the Tulip Tree Silk Moth, Southern Flying Squirrel, Pine Vole and the Eastern Hog Nosed Snake. Fish with intriguing names like the threatened Eastern Sand Darter live in Norfolk creeks and rivers along with the endangered Wavy-Rayed Lamp Mussel.



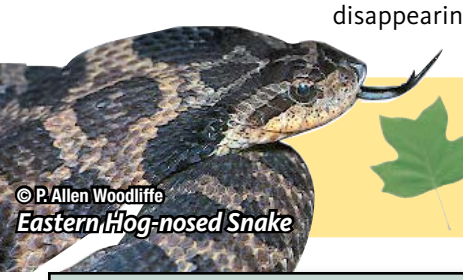
Spiny Softshell Turtle

Rural Communities Aid Endangered "Friend of the Farmer"

The endangered American Badger likes to eat groundhogs, rabbits and other small mammals, making them an ally to farmers. Originally found across Carolinian Canada, most of Ontario's 200 remaining badgers live in Norfolk where our sandy soils are ideal for digging and building burrows. Look for them in abandoned farm fields, oak savanna and woodland edges. The **American Badger Recovery Team** works with rural communities to raise awareness and collect new and historical reports of the animal. As a result, landowners have significantly enhanced our understanding of this disappearing species.



Old growth Tulip Trees - a rare habitat



Eastern Hog-nosed Snake

Carolinian Canada has 1/3 of the country's species at risk so they live almost everywhere. Mention this factsheet to get a free Wild Neighbours Kit from info@carolinian.org or 519-433-7077.

AMERICAN BADGER

(Taxidea taxus jacksoni)

ENDANGERED



Look for:

- Grizzled gray with bold black and white stripes on the head and face
- Front claws extremely long

Did You Know?
The American Badger is a nocturnal carnivore – uses powerful claws to dig – Is at risk from habitat loss, road mortality and human persecution

HELP! Save grasslands – Leave grassy habitat on woodland edges undisturbed

REWARD: Control rodents and other pests

IF YOU SEE THIS ENDANGERED ANIMAL CONTACT:
wildlife@carolinian.org or Mary Gartshore, Badger Recovery Team 519-586-3985

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER

(Melanerpes erythrocephalus)

SPECIAL CONCERN



Look for:

- Bright crimson head
- White belly, black back and white wing patch

Did You Know?
This woodpecker nests in cavities of dead snags and dying trees in open deciduous woods – Is attacted to peanuts and suet – Is at risk due to habitat loss from logging, firewood cutting and dead-tree removal

HELP! Leave snags and cavity trees in your woodlot

REWARD: Forest pest control

IF YOU SEE THIS ANIMAL CONTACT:
wildlife@carolinian.org or Jody Allair, Bird Studies Canada 519-586-3531, ext. 21

Find a Habitat Partner in Norfolk

A Helping Hand for Landowners

A Good Place to Start for Property Assistance

Norfolk Land Stewardship Council
www.ontariostewardship.org/ontariostewardship/home/osNLSCIndex.asp
519-426-4259

Long Point Region Conservation Authority *www.lprca.on.ca*
519-428-4623

Specialized Project Assistance or Funding

Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS)
519-426-5999, ext. 2220 Farm pilot projects - Ecological Goods and Services

Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program 1-800-268-8959

Ducks Unlimited Canada *www.ducksunlimited.org*
Darrell Randell 1-888-402-4444 Wetland protection & creation

Nature Conservancy of Canada *www.natureconservancy.ca*
Heather Arnold 1-866-281-5331 Land protection, conservation easements

Long Point Basin Land Trust *www.lpblt.on.ca*
519-586-8309 Land protection, conservation easements

Ontario Forestry Association *www.forest.on.ca*
1-800-387-0790 Ontario Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources *www.*mnr.gov.on.ca
Aylmer Office 519-773-9241
- A Guide to Stewardship Planning for Natural Areas

Species at Risk Stewardship Fund 519-354-4108

Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association *www.ontariosoilcrop.org*
Environmental Farm Plan

TD Friends of the Environment Foundation *www.td.com/fef/*
Funding for community environmental projects

Meet Your Neighbours – Learn, Volunteer, Network

Norfolk Field Naturalists *www.norfolkfieldnaturalists.org*

Norfolk Woodlot Owners Association *www.norfolkwoodlots.com*

Long Point World Biosphere Reserve Foundation
www.kwic.com/~longpointbio

Norfolk Federation of Agriculture *www.nfawebsite.org* 519-428-0576

Good Sources of Information

Association for Canadian Educational Resources
905-275-7685 Volunteer habitat monitoring *www.aceracre.org*

Bird Studies Canada 1-888-448-2473 *bsc-eoc.org*
Project FeederWatch and more

Canadian Wildlife Federation *www.wildaboutgardening.org*

Environment Canada *ec.gc.ca* 1-800-668-6767
Species at Risk *sararegistry.gc.ca*
Ecological Gifts Program *on.ec.gc.ca/wildlife/ecogifts*

Evergreen 1-888-426-3138 *www.evergreen.ca* Native Plant Database

Land Owner Resource Centre *lrconline.com*
- Management Options for Abandoned Farm Fields
- Extension Notes: forestry, tree planting, agroforestry, wildlife & more

NatureWatch *naturewatch.ca*
Volunteer environmental monitoring

Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters *www.invadingspecies.com*
1-800-563-7711 Invasive species hotline, Habitat enhancement

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs *www.omafra.gov.on.ca*
Simcoe Office 519-426-4108
- Best Management Practices: Buffer Strips, Fish & Wildlife

Ontario Nature 1-800-440-2366 *ontarionature.org* Volunteers for Nature
- Birds on the Farm: A Stewardship Guide

Ontario Society for Ecological Restoration *www.serontario.org*
- Native Plant Resource Guide

Ontario Stewardship *www.ontariostewardship.org*

Ontario Woodlot Association 1-888-791-1103 *www.ont-woodlot-assoc.org*

Royal Ontario Museum *www.rom.on.ca*
- Online factsheets on Species at Risk

Rural Landowner Stewardship Guide *www.stewardshipmanual.ca*
- Rural Landowner Stewardship Guide for the Ontario Landscape

Tallgrass Ontario 519-674-1543 *www.tallgrassontario.org*
Tallgrass prairie & savanna conservation

University of Guelph Arboretum 519-824-4120x52113
Uoguelph.ca/arboretum Native Plant workshops and publications

CAROLINIAN CANADA COALITION

Collaborating for a Healthy Ecoregion

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OTHER PUBLICATIONS:

- ***New*** The Natural Treasures of Carolinian Canada
- Species at Risk in Carolinian Canada & How to Help
- Big Picture Map
- Carolinian Canada Signature Sites Guide

NEW!

CARING FOR NATURE HANDS-ON

A New Workshop Series for Landowners

- Plan Your Habitat Project
- Get Ideas to Enhance your Property & Reduce your Ecological Footprint
- Meet Local Conservation Partners & Other Landowners
- Consult with Experts
- Find out about Funding & Assistance

519-433-7077 workshop@carolinian.org

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