



BIOSPHERE BEACON

Official Newsletter of the
Long Point Biosphere Region

SUMMER 2023



We acknowledge that we are located on the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabe and Haudenasaunee peoples. The Long Point Biosphere Region stands in sovereignty on these treaty lands with the Mississaugas of the Credit.

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Message from the Chair - Tom Via

chair@longpointbiosphere.com



Greetings to all our Members, Supporters, Funders, and Long Point Biosphere Region (LPBR) biodiversity and conservation enthusiasts.

Summer is an amazing time to be present within our amazing place, as our forests awaken with life, beauty, and splendor! I recently took advantage of forest walks where I observed and learned about the activity and transitions of the forest floor and under-story which changes weekly and spectacularly. I still find nature curious and amazing as each week various species of native flowers know it is their time to bloom, seed, and then wait until next year for their turn to do it all over again. I also learned about the breeding cycle for salamanders. While I missed the "commotion in the ocean," just standing in front of the seasonal pond and learning about this crucial cycle of life process that needs to happen each year before the waters dry up is incredible. Another amazing adventure I participated in was a paddle up Big Creek on a birding expedition. We observed many species, but spotting four young eagles in flights was a highlight of the afternoon. While amazing, spectacular and beauty are three words that partly describe my recent experiences in Long Point's forests, there is another word that may describe the enormous water snake that was sunning on a fallen tree, much too close to my kayak for my own comfort! All to say Long Point Biosphere is truly an amazing place and I wish to thank each and every one of you who has demonstrated continued support for the preservation of our impressive, but fragile biodiversity in Norfolk County.

On the Biosphere business-side of thing, our fully volunteer Board, volunteer/members, and committed group of paid contributors have continued their amazing work throughout the winter and early spring months. Our work to facilitate the qualification of other protected areas within the Long Point Biosphere with funding from Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) has made significant strides which you will learn about in this edition of the Beacon.

LPBR, with the support of Nature Canada and ECCC, and in collaboration with international artists, First Nations, and local secondary students, commissioned an impressive mural in recognition of our Biosphere and Reconciliation. This meaningful and beautiful art-piece will be proudly displayed at Long Point Eco-Adventures. Please stop by for a look and support one of our very best partners!

Finally, I have recently joined Wes Wilson (LPBR Director), Bernie Solymar (Norfolk Field Naturalists), and others on a working group whose mandate is to formulate the actions that will lead to the formation of a Natural Heritage Strategy for Norfolk County. Given recent initiatives put forward by the provincial government, we find ourselves in a crucial period for protecting our fragile biodiversity in Norfolk County and the Biosphere Region. While the road is long when working with the government to establish policy that becomes part of the County's next "Official Plan" in 2028, I felt very encouraged by the intentions stated when meeting with Norfolk Planning. Your Long Point Biosphere team is very active, making a difference, and I invite you to join us as we do our best as stewards of this, again, amazing place.

Contact me anytime.

Tom

Message from the President - Brian Craig

president@longpointbiosphere.com



My favourite season of the year is springtime, and there is no other place on our planet that I want to be but in Norfolk County.

Situated in the heart of the Carolinian Life Zone, we are blessed with a great diversity of plants and animals, arguably greater than any other place in our country. I enjoy watching our trees flower; from the wind pollinated cottonwoods and aspens, to the trees pollinated by insects, such as our basswoods and tulip trees. And our Biosphere is visited by hundreds of species of spring migrant birds, many staying and nesting, and many heading further north to their breeding grounds.

For me though, the most exciting part of spring is knowing that the many conservation organizations and agencies working in Norfolk County are beginning fieldwork and creating and managing habitat to maintain and enhance the biodiversity in our Long Point Biosphere Region. We sincerely thank you. Continuing to work together, we can sustain that delicate balance between conservation and economic development and ensure a future that is equitable for all species.

It has been a busy spring: exclusion fencing repaired along the Long Point Causeway; Moccasin Identifier workshops with students; an art installation at Long Point Eco-Adventures, hosting the Ontario Biosphere regional workshop, and year-end reporting and accounting. Thank you to our dedicated project managers and Directors! We would like to welcome several new staff to our organization.

- **Kari Gunson** has accepted the position of Project Manager for the Road Ecology Working Group for the Priority Place initiative. Her spring activities are described further in this newsletter.
- **Sarah Kirk** has accepted the position of Fund Development Manager, bringing a wealth of experience to the Biosphere.
- **Jennifer Banfield** has accepted the position of bookkeeper and also has many years of relevant experience in the job.

We would like to thank our funders; Environment Canada and Climate Change (ECCC), Ontario Trillium Foundation, and our many members and supporters who have enabled our biosphere to undertake exciting and innovative projects.

All the best,

Brian



BIODIVERSITY

SPOOKY HOLLOW HELPS MEET NATIONAL GOALS



Jen Baker, Land Trust Manager of Hamilton Naturalists' Club, and friends visit Spooky Hollow

Many studies have demonstrated that biodiversity is important to improving ecosystem function and providing vital ecological services to communities and the world.

This includes the basic provisions of life, such as food, clean air, water, and healthy soils. It also provides protection from floods, erosion, climate change, and diseases through biological control with medical and genetic resources.

Canada has committed to acting on the global loss of biodiversity and specifically to protecting 30% of our terrestrial land and freshwater by 2030.

This initiative is known as the Pathway to Canada Target 1. After evaluation work completed in 2022 with the Long Point Biosphere, we are pleased to announce that Spooky Hollow Nature Sanctuary has been recognized as contributing to these national commitments.

Spooky Hollow is owned by the Hamilton Field Naturalists, and we are grateful for their participation in this project.

More areas are undergoing evaluation for this same recognition, and we look forward to saying that Norfolk is substantially contributing to Canada's Target 1 commitments.



EXPLORING THE BIOSPHERE

OVER 40 WANDERINGS THIS YEAR - JOIN US!

It has been a great year for a Wander on the trails in Norfolk County. Our Wandering Wednesdays signature series of hikes was offered all year. We visited 27 different trails, wandering throughout the four seasons and always rain or shine and, of course, snow. Some of our most beautiful experiences were always when we thought the weather would stop us.

Last year we managed to get 43 wanders in. These hikes are offered free to people of all walks of life. Spring ephemerals were amazing this year with long-lasting blooms of trilliums, hepatica, blood root, and trout lilies. As we head into the warmer months, we look forward to wandering on more of the meandering trails in the Long Point Biosphere Region.





SUPPORTING OUR PARTNERS

BIRDS CANADA BIRDATHON



In May, the Biosphere team took to Big Creek to enjoy kayaking and spring birding while contributing to the Birdathon.

The Long Point Biosphere Region staff and board members are actively participating as a team in the Birds Canada Birdathon, and we encourage others to join us.

The Birdathon is a national event raising crucial funds to support bird conservation throughout Canada.

You can support these efforts by heading to www.birdscanada.org and donating in support of the Long Point Biosphere Region team.

EARTH DAY 2023 CLEAN-UP IN NORFOLK: *Inspiring and a little unsettling*

Though the May 22nd, 2023, Earth-Day Clean-Up event was deferred to the next day (Sunday) due to inclement weather, we saw an inspiring turn out of volunteers and a lot of enthusiasm.

The Long Point Biosphere Region team partnered with our friends from the Sunrise Rotary Club, Scotlynn, and Nova Mutual Insurance Company that day to pick up trash along the Lynn Valley Trail system.

Long Point's Project Manager Cynthia Brink and Director Janet Dassinger spent part of their Clean-up Day pulling **SIX (6) FLAT-SCREEN TV's** out of Lynn Creek - as well as picking up countless water bottles and other trash that lined the Trail. Mark Boerkamp from Norfolk County, who accompanied the volunteers to supply gloves and other supports, picked up the many, many garbage bags that were filled that day.

For many reasons, this is something we will want to do again.





SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

MORE AMAZING PLACES IN NORFOLK COUNTY



This year the Long Point World Biosphere Region will be celebrating a total of **twenty-two (22)** Norfolk County sites as **Amazing Places** and models for sustainable tourism. With support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Government of Ontario, three (3) new Amazing Places were identified in the past year through a project involving stakeholder consultations, local meetings, and other initiatives. The new ones are Apple Hill Lavender Farm, Homegrown Hideaway glamping, and Charlotteville Brewing Company.

The project also grouped the local Amazing Places under themed itineraries as one-day packages for families, couples, and all residents and visitors to learn, explore, and have fun. The list of locations and links are highlighted under **Amazing Places** on our website – where you can also check out the suggested [GoAmazing Itineraries](#).

Ontario
Trillium Foundation



WORLD'S TOP EXCHANGE PROGRAM FUNDS LONG POINT INTERN FROM GERMANY



Lisa (on the right) meets with Batstone Ecology Lab students and faculty, McMaster University

This summer, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) (recognized as the world's largest funding organization for the international exchange of students and researchers) provided scholarship support for Lisa Kurapkat, a graduate student from Germany, to live and work in the Long Point Biosphere Region for three months. Lisa is interested in regional development and ecology in coastal communities. She has a bachelor's degree in landscape development (B. Eng.) in Germany and is enrolled in a master's program in Sustainable Regional Development. She has worked for top landscape engineering firms as well as working in places that have much in common with Long Point. These include Spiekeroog, a German island located in the Wadden Sea, the gigantic Curonian Spit in Lithuania, sites in Barbados, and the tidal flats in South Korea. We are fortunate to have her enthusiasm and expertise applied to projects in the region.



OUTDOOR EDUCATION

SCHOOL STUDENTS CONNECT WITH NATURE



For the 2022-2023 land-based education offerings, we had 15 schools participate in a day of connecting to nature. The days started with a trip to the Long Point Bird Observatory where our close working partners from Birds Canada shared the wonderful work in the lab on site. Students learned that there are three banding station locations in the biosphere. They learned about the history and the important data collected in these locations. Students then travelled by bus to the Big Creek National Wildlife Reserve located along the Long Point Causeway to learn about the importance of the Causeway Improvement Project to mitigate road mortality of turtles, snakes and other wildlife that frequent this busy roadway.

We then wrapped up our adventure with our young naturalists by visiting the Backus Woods Nature Conservancy of Canada property to learn about Norfolk's old-growth forest, its inhabitants and the connection that exists amongst the trees that are all connected by mycelial networks: evidence that the forest collaborates to thrive is a wonderful example of how humans can learn from nature. After 4.5 hours of hiking and exploring, these students go home a little more connected to nature, sometimes a tad muddy with a healthy dose of the outdoors in their minds, spirits, and, sometimes, clothes.

LOCAL SCHOOLS INSTALL GARDENS OF PLANTS ENDEMIC TO THE BIOSPHERE

The NatureHood land-based learning program has collaborated with local educators to establish what are known as "Host Gardens" at schools throughout Norfolk County. The gardens function as living labs where students can learn about local biological systems in a way that teachers can integrate with the Ontario Environmental Curriculum. Led by Sherry Black Shrub, the project has seen these special gardens planted at ten schools in total with students conducting a Bioblitz before and after the plantings to study what changes might have taken place on their school grounds as a result. The Host Gardens not only constitute small restorations and more habitat, but also an opportunity for students to learn in a unique, yet easily accessed environment.





SPECIAL DOCUMENTARY FILM

LONG POINT BIOSPHERE FILM TO BE LAUNCHED AT GALA

This special place we call home has many names, Norfolk County, the Long Point Biosphere Region and now the Long Point Walsingham Forest Priority Place.

Long recognized as a UNESCO World Biosphere, our region is now designated a Priority Place by Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC).

This designation recognizes the area as a stretch of Carolinian Forest that is home to many unique species and an area in which there are many compassionate organizations working together in restorations, road mortality mitigation, invasive species monitoring and eradication, outreach, and communication. It also recognizes your support and community involvement.

During the 2022 field season, our team spent time with researchers and ecologists to film some of these activities. Film producer Gregg McLachlan from WorkCabin Creative and Long Point Biosphere Project Manager Cynthia Brink collaborated on the 70-minute documentary "A Priority Place."

The Long Point Biosphere Region Gala later this year will be an extravaganza and fundraiser featuring a special showing of this documentary highlighting all the amazing work underway in our area.

We look forward to inviting you to the film's unveiling that will immerse you in the experience of working on the land in a way that we hope will be unforgettable and even breathtaking.





BIOSPHERE MURAL PROJECT

INTERNATIONAL AND INDIGENOUS ARTISTS COLLABORATE



Future visitors to Long Point Eco-Adventures will be greeted by a unique, inspiring, and expressive art installation. The large mural integrates a variety of images around a concept created by two international artists,

Azurite De Luca and Benjamin Swatez, who have been honored for their works in troubled regions around the world. Working with UNICEF, Save the Children, Rotary International and other agencies, they have created murals that promote peace and recognize the hardships people have faced in war-torn regions.

This past month (May 2023) Deluca and Swatez collaborated with First Nations artist Bezaliel Hill along with local students and others to complete the new mural. The mural will eventually be displayed on the Long Point Eco-Adventures Observatory building.

Carolyn King, former Chief of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nations and a recipient of the Order of Canada and her team from Moccasin Identifier project also spent time with students from the Delhi, Simcoe Composite, Valley Heights, and Waterford high schools. The students contributed indirectly to the mural through art produced during the workshops held under

Moccasin Identifier, an initiative to raise awareness of Indigenous culture, Treaty rights, and ancestral presence in Treaty #3 on the lands across Ontario. The workshops and the mural production were organized by Project Manager Cynthia Brink for the Long Point Biosphere Region with financial support from Nature Canada and the federal department of Environment and Climate Change Canada.

This Mural is the first of four expected to grace the Norfolk County landscape.





ROAD ECOLOGY

TURTLES, SNAKES, AND MORE



The Road Ecology Working Group has undertaken several context specific initiatives at prioritized locations where we know turtles and snakes are at risk of being struck by vehicles when crossing roads to nest and to access habitat. We will be placing seasonal signage from May to October along the roads to mark these locations and to remind motorists to watch for wildlife and to drive cautiously.

1) This year we established a partnership with local businesses (Long Point Eco-Adventures and Burning Kiln) to mitigate a known turtle crossing corridor along Front Road. Previous monitoring had shown that the turtles climbed up from the marsh to nest on trails and on roadsides, therefore we built a 200m eco-fence with nesting substrate along its length! Not only will our eco-fence intercept turtles and provide nesting habitat, but we will be able to find nests more easily and protect them from predation using tested techniques! Any nests in hazardous locations, can be excavated and its eggs brought to safe incubation labs, and when the baby turtles hatch, we can organize safe release events back to Turkey Point marsh that would otherwise be a difficult trek for small turtles.

2) We have organized a community-based volunteer effort called 'Wildlife Road Watch' to patrol roads for turtle crossings. These patrols are focused along roads where we can't install mitigation, such as fencing, because there are too many access roads, driveways, and cottages, such as those on Erie Boulevard. We will be working with cottagers that live there to look for and help turtles crossroads safely as they travel between the marsh and nesting areas. Our efforts will be prioritized during key turtle movement times such as early morning after rain.

3) We will be testing and piloting turtle and snake eco-fence prototypes along County Road 60, west of Hwy 59 adjacent to Big Creek. This eco-fence will be



Brian Fettes, Stripe Art, Kari Gunson, Road Ecology Project Manager

used to direct and funnel both turtles and snakes to existing large culverts that are currently conveying water under the road. The culverts are situated in known reptile road-kill hotspots, and this initiative will not only reduce roadkill but will facilitate safe movement across roads improving connectivity between protected habitats.

If you would like to volunteer for this important initiative, please email:
lornightingale@gmail.com



REGIONAL BIOSPHERES MEETING

TEAMS FROM ONTARIO BIOSPHERES MEET IN LONG POINT



This spring, the LPBR hosted two other Ontario biospheres, Frontenac Arch Biosphere and Georgian Bay (Mnidoowamii) Biosphere for a Regional Gathering of the Biospheres. The intention of this event was to bring together Indigenous and non-Indigenous people for two days of learning, connecting with each other and connecting with the land.

Participants took part in “The Blanket Exercise,” an immersive experience of our shared history.

The Moccasin Identifier Project team led the group in discussions and exercises around treaties and treaty lands. Spending time together on the land and water allowed us to connect and explore opportunities for partnerships. We were so pleased to show our Biosphere friends everything that the LPBR has to offer – spectacular birding, incredible biodiversity and species found nowhere else in Canada!



NATIONAL BIOSPHERES GATHERING

1ST CANADIAN BIOSPHERES MEETING SINCE 2019

The Long Point Biosphere was well represented at the 2023 Canadian Biosphere Reserve Association (CBRA) meeting in Ottawa, the first national gathering of association members in almost four years. Our President Brian Craig, Board Director Andrew Couturier, Conservation Director Sarah Emons, and Project Manager Cynthia Brink attended the three-day event which brought representatives of Canada's 19 biosphere regions to the Canadian Museum of Nature in February to share and learn.



The gathering not only gave the Long Point team a chance to reconnect with their colleagues from other regions, but also to hear presentations from Environment and Climate Change Canada, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, and others on project management and governance. The sessions covered a range of issues of mutual concern such as declines in biodiversity, public engagement, and fundraising. Each biosphere had an opportunity to showcase its own work. Long Point's causeway fencing and efforts to address road mortality were among the local projects of broad interest.

Sarah Emons also gave a presentation to the gathering on the challenges and successes of CBRA's national conservation project and later had a productive discussion with Ms. Julie Dabrusin, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, who now intends to tour the Long Point Biosphere Region this year.



THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this edition of the Biosphere Beacon and for your ongoing support of the Long Point Biosphere. Your dedication to our mission is truly appreciated and it helps us to continue our important work in protecting and preserving this unique and valuable ecosystem.

As you know, the Long Point Biosphere Reserve is one of the most biologically diverse and important habitats in North America. The work that we do here is critical to the preservation of this unique ecosystem, which is home to a wide variety of plant and animal species, many of which are endangered. In the past year, we have made significant progress towards our goal of sustainable management of the reserve.

Thanks to your support, we have been able to conduct extensive research, implement new conservation strategies, and engage with local communities to raise awareness about the importance of protecting this vital ecosystem.

JOIN US/DONATE

Your support can make a difference in protecting this valuable area and preserving it for future generations. By donating to the Long Point Biosphere, you can help fund conservation efforts and research to better understand and protect this unique environment. Your contribution, can have a significant impact in ensuring the longevity of this vital ecosystem.

Renewing your membership for the Long Point Biosphere is important in supporting their conservation efforts and ensuring the preservation of the unique ecosystem. By renewing your membership, you can continue to enjoy access to educational programs, events, and resources while contributing to the protection of the environment.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Members please note:

our Annual General Meeting held at the Port Dover Community Centre



October 2nd, 2023 (6:30-8:30pm)

11th Annual Long Point Biosphere Region Research and Conservation Conference



November 3rd, 2023

Proposals and Submissions:

conference@longpointbiosphere.com

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SPECIAL THANKS...

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