

Greenleaves

ISSUE #2, 2026

Member Newsletter of **Bruce Grey Woodlands Association**



President's Message



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Faces a Major Overhaul



Butternut Trees



Turtle Nesting Season



2006 Mississauga Gypsy Moth Control
Program



Oak Wilt



Frothy Bubbles



Event Recaps: Boyd's Crevice, Brant Tract,
Dunvegan Farm



Bruce Grey
Woodlands
Association

Upcoming BGWA Events:

Planning the following events:

- Invasive species canoe paddle of portion of Saugeen River
- **Oct 24** - Chainsaw Safety Awareness Course
- **Oct 25 afternoon** - Chainsaw Maintenance and Sharpening Course
- **Nov 7-8** - Chainsaw Safety Certification course

Would you like to host a member tour of your woodland property?

Contact Lloyd Holbrook
holbrooklloyd8@gmail.com

Upcoming Board Meetings

Sept 12 @ 6 PM - Grey Sauble Conservation

Members Welcome!

Contact secretary@bgwa.ca to confirm format (virtual, in-person, hybrid) and location or zoom link.

BGWA's vision: Promoting healthy forests and ecosystems in Bruce and Grey Counties through education, recreation and sustainable management practices.

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President's Message

By Jim White

Dear BGWA Members,

Good morning!

I am writing this President's Message from my campsite at Turkey Point Provincial Park. We have also made a side trip to St. Williams, an important historic centre of excellence for reforestation research and practice in Ontario dating back to the early 1900s. Today, that legacy continues through the work of the St. Williams Nursery and Ecology Centre.

The Events and Education Committee has been busy this spring, organizing four successful events. We have also worked to diversify our programming by offering a variety of topics and scheduling events at different times to better accommodate our members.

Our first tour was led by our 2025 AGM guest speaker, Beth Gilhespy, CEO of the Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy. On a sunny Sunday afternoon, members joined Beth for a geology hike through Boyd's Crevices on the Bruce Trail. As we explored several deep crevasses, we journeyed through hundreds of millions of years of geological history. Beth explained the processes that formed the Niagara Escarpment and shared a fascinating collection of fossils, primarily corals, discovered along the route.

A few weeks later, Susan McGowan, and Jill Mandigo led a tree identification and forest walk. Participants learned to identify a remarkable variety of trees and shrubs within a relatively short distance, making for an informative and enjoyable outing.

At the peak of spring (ephemeral) wildflower season, we partnered with Saugeen Nature for a plant identification hike at the Brant Tract in Bruce County. Led by botanical experts Angus Inksetter and Nikkii May, the tour featured a spectacular display of trilliums, dog-tooth violets, wild ginger, leatherwood, and many lesser-known native plants. Interest was so strong that we reached our maximum number of participants.

The first weekend in June saw what I believe was a BGWA first: a member property tour hosted by Brian MacLeod Rogers. The event was well attended and co-led by Brian and David Wiley, RPF. Brian has contributed photos and an article highlighting key features of the property and the tour. In total, 26 participants enjoyed this unique opportunity to learn from a fellow member's stewardship experience.

In the following pages, you will find several excellent member contributions. Heather Zurbrigg shares her knowledge of butternut trees.

cont'd

President's Message (cont'd)

Our 2026 AGM guest speaker, Tony Fleischmann, provides a synopsis of Mississauga's Spongy Moth control program. Director Susan McGowan has prepared articles updating us on current Spongy Moth population trends and the status of Oak Wilt Disease. Marica Ranger submitted a photo and some research about frothy bubbles she found on a tree, and Chelsea Vieira submitted an article about turtle nesting season.

As a volunteer-based organization, BGWA depends on members who are willing to share their knowledge, expertise, and experiences. We are equally grateful to those who participate in our educational events and contribute to the vibrant community we continue to build together. If you have not yet attended an event, I encourage you to do so. Four new events are planned for the summer and fall. Lace up your boots, come on out, and make some new friends along the way!

Our ever-popular Chainsaw Safety courses were once again offered this spring, including a Women-Only course and a Chainsaw Safety Awareness and Certification program. New this year was a half-day Chainsaw Sharpening and Maintenance course, which proved extremely popular. Personally, I learned several useful techniques and simple maintenance practices that I had never considered before. The course reference manual, Cutter's Edge, is an invaluable resource.

One of BGWA's key objectives is to represent our members' interests regarding legislation, taxation, and regulations that affect forest property ownership and associated business interests. In support of this objective, we are pleased to include an excellent article by journalist Emily Dickson. Originally published in the Summer edition of In The Hills magazine, the publisher has graciously granted BGWA permission to republish this informative article examining the proposed amalgamation of Ontario's Conservation Authorities. I believe you will find it both timely and thought-provoking. If you feel strongly about the issue, I encourage you to contact your local MPP and share your perspective.

Looking ahead, we are excited to offer our first canoe and kayak excursion in Bruce County, where participants will learn about invasive aquatic and shoreline plant species. Space is limited to ensure everyone can see the plants and hear our guide, Director Chris Sanderson, so be sure to register early.

We will also be conducting several brief member surveys over the summer to help us better understand your interests and priorities. Your feedback will assist us in delivering meaningful programs and services that align with our organizational objectives. If you have not yet attended one of our events, we especially encourage you to participate. We only need five to ten minutes of your time, and your input will be invaluable.

I hope I do not sound like a broken record when I once again ask for member contributions to GreenLeaves. We are always looking for articles, photographs, stories, games for children, and other content of interest. We would also love to hear about your property—what makes it special to you and your family, and what stewardship projects you are proud of.

Please consider sharing your contributions with us at newsletter@bgwa.ca.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our upcoming events as we continue learning, exploring, and building friendships through the efforts of the BGWA Events and Education Committee — 100% locally grown!

Have a wonderful summer!

Best regards,

Jim White

Explainer: Ontario's Conservation System Faces a Major Overhaul

BY EMILY DICKSON
MAY 9, 2026
IN THE HILLS MAGAZINE
INTHEHILLS.CA

By next spring, familiar names like Credit Valley Conservation would disappear if 36 authorities are folded into nine – with potential ripple effects across the Headwaters region.

The Ontario government is moving forward with major restructuring plans to reduce the number of conservation authorities by 75 per cent and consolidate them under a new provincial conservation agency. The 2026 Ontario budget, which passed in April, officially mandates the consolidation.

Conservation authorities, municipalities and community groups across the province have voiced opposition to the decision. The main concerns are loss of local expertise, risks to programs and slower development approvals.

During a recent TVO panel discussion, Ontario Headwaters Institute executive director Andrew McCammon described the consolidation plan as “another in a series of cutbacks to really the most important watershed management form in Ontario.” OHI is a charity that promotes watershed security.

Michael Palleschi, chair of Credit Valley Conservation – which is responsible for restoring, monitoring and protecting the 950-square-kilometre Credit River Watershed – said in a March media statement that while the CVC supports modernization, “dismantling a high-performing authority that is already meeting provincial objectives does not advance that goal.”

To date, few authorities have shown support for consolidation.

Here's what we know so far about the consolidation plans and the rollout, which is scheduled for completion by early 2027.

What's happening to local conservation authorities?

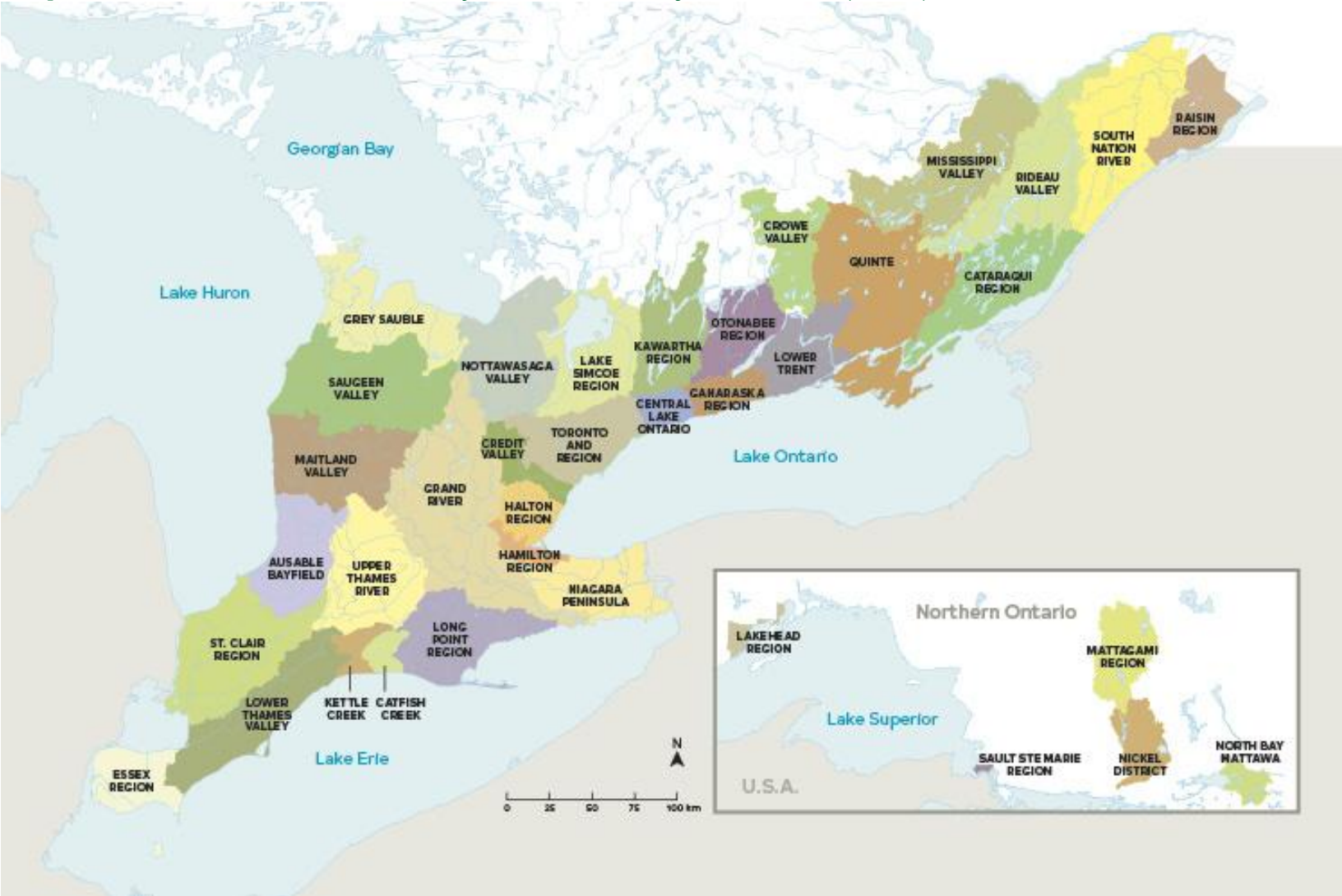
On October 31, 2025, the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks announced the creation of the new Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency to provide centralized leadership for conservation authorities. A news release said the move is designed to improve service delivery, cut red tape and “help get shovels in the ground faster on homes and other local infrastructure projects.” The OPCA then laid out plans to consolidate Ontario's current 36 conservation authorities into larger regional bodies.

Conservation authorities manage watersheds to safeguard against natural risks, such as flooding, and support the protection, restoration and responsible use of natural environments. They also act as critical environmental gatekeepers for building approvals for infrastructure projects, housing and roads.

The consolidation would affect the watersheds of the four conservation authorities in Headwaters: the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Credit Valley Conservation, the Grand River Conservation Authority and the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority.

cont'd

Explainer: Ontario's Conservation System Faces a Major Overhaul (cont'd)



This map shows the 36 current Ontario conservation authorities, including the four conservation authorities in Headwaters: Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Credit Valley Conservation Authority, Grand River Conservation Authority and the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority.

Though none of the NVCA's conservation areas is located in the Headwaters section of the Nottawasaga River's watershed, the other three conservation authorities own and manage popular conservation areas in Dufferin, Caledon and Erin:

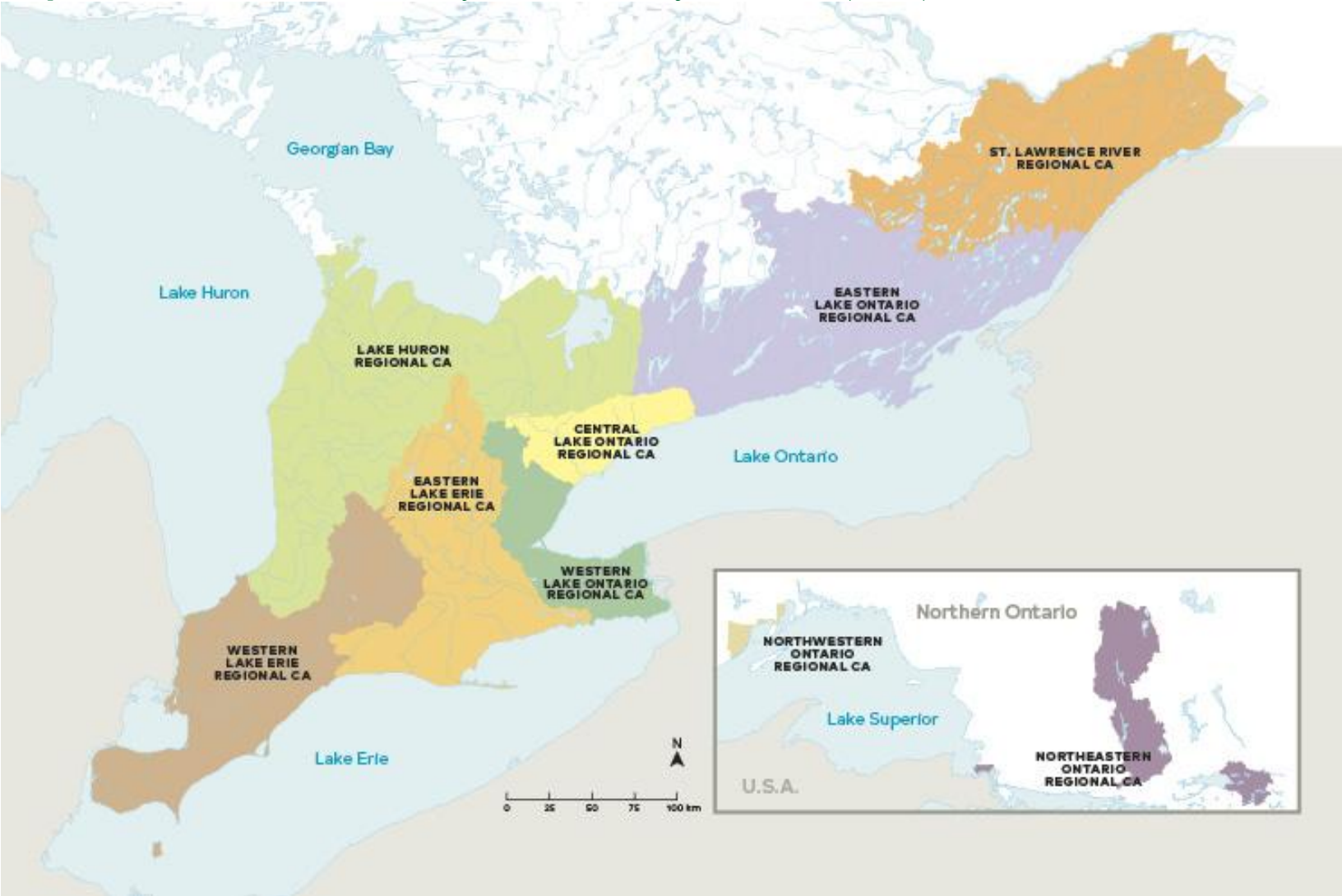
- TRCA: Albion Hills and Glen Haffy conservation areas in Caledon
- CVC: Belfountain, Ken Whillans and Terra Cotta conservation areas in Caledon, as well as Island Lake Conservation Area at the edge of Orangeville and, along with the GRCA, the Elora Cataract Trailway (in partnership with the Elora Cataract Trailway Association)
- GRCA: the Luther Marsh Wildlife Management Area in Grand Valley and, along with CVC, the Elora Cataract Trailway (in partnership with the Elora Cataract Trailway Association)

After consolidation, the existing conservation authorities become part of the new amalgamated authorities and will no longer operate under their current names. The TRCA becomes part of the Central Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority; the CVC joins the Western Lake Ontario Regional Conservation Authority; the GRCA falls under the Eastern Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority; and the NVCA would be merged into the Lake Huron Regional Conservation Authority.

Why are conservation authorities being consolidated?

The Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks stated that the current conservation system has become “fragmented,” and that inconsistent standards and timelines “can slow down development approvals.”

Explainer: Ontario's Conservation System Faces a Major Overhaul (cont'd)



This map outlines the nine new regional conservation authorities that are slated to exist by early 2027.

This risks hampering the authorities’ abilities to protect their communities from floods and other natural hazards, the ministry said. Other stated reasons for the consolidation include unpredictable service delivery, outdated data systems, administrative duplication and a lack of transparency with respect to asset management.

The province’s initial plan was to consolidate the authorities into seven regional bodies. However, in November 2025, after holding regional workshops and consultations with conservation authorities, municipalities, stakeholders and Indigenous communities, the province amended the proposed number of regional bodies to nine. Analysis of the feedback indicated that seven authorities would be too large to manage and would align less effectively with geographical regions and their watershed needs.

The Lakehead Region Conservation Authority, based in Thunder Bay, avoided amalgamation with other authorities along Lake Huron – some more than 1,000 kilometres away – following significant public pushback. The LRCA will be rebranded as the Northwestern Ontario Regional Conservation Authority, but will remain a separate entity, which LRCA chief administrative officer Tammy Cook said, “feels like a victory.”

To support the transition, Ontario has earmarked \$3 million in annual funding to the OPCA beginning in 2026. The restructuring is expected to be complete by February 2027.

Why do conservation authorities oppose consolidation?

Most conservation authorities have criticized the move, citing risks such as potential loss of local watershed expertise and community representation, threats to conservation programs and partnerships, operational disruption and slower development approvals – contrary to what the province predicts.

The CVC disputed the province's claims that conservation authorities stand in the way of development, saying that it currently processes development permit applications within an average of 14 days, "far exceeding the province's 90-day service standard."

The Peel regional chair and CEO, Nando Iannicca, expressed concerns about whether other municipalities could gain jurisdiction over Peel's conservation authority lands. He added that the CVC and the TRCA, both of which manage conservation in Peel, "have the capacity and capability to remain standalone regional conservation authorities."

The NVCA took issue with the large scale of the consolidation, suggesting that a more "geographically coherent" plan would involve merging with nearby Georgian Bay-area watersheds to achieve better alignment, reduce transition costs and provide local accountability protections.

And the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority has raised concerns about donor trust: the area contains properties donated to, or sold to, the authority by residents who expect their long-term care to be managed by a local body.

So far, there has been limited support for the consolidation. In one example, the GRCA stated that it sees "no direct implications for the GRCA's current programs or services" at this time.

How has the consolidation plan been challenged?

Since the consolidation announcement, environmental groups and concerned communities have led opposition efforts via protests, petitions and letter-writing campaigns.

Ontario Nature, a charity that works to protect wild species and spaces, launched an online petition to "re-empower conservation authorities" and urged the government not to proceed with the consolidation. On March 25, the organization joined a coalition of environmental and civic organizations and professionals, including the National Farmers Union of Ontario and the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations, for a press conference at Queen's Park.

According to Josh Suppan, president of NFU-O, the planned amalgamation "threatens the livelihoods and conservation efforts of farmers and Ontarians as a whole," as it could erode protections for farmland and natural heritage lands.

As part of the province-wide Fight Ford rally on April 25, protestors demonstrated outside MPP Sylvia Jones' Orangeville constituency office, calling for protection for the Headwaters region.

On the TVO panel discussion, OHI's McCammon criticized the government for being "completely focused on land-use expansion [and] sprawl development." Without integrated land-use and watershed planning, he said, the province will continue to face flooding and water insecurity.

What happens next?

In the coming months, conservation authorities are required to follow a step-by-step transition process across key functions such as HR, finance and IT, based on a roadmap set by the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks.

The current authorities must also appoint two members to a transition committee, led by a project chair appointed by the OPCA. Each chair will act as the authority's chief administrative officer for 24 months. CVC confirmed that its board is following the guidelines and is currently forming its transition committee, which should be in place by this summer.

Explainer: Ontario's Conservation System Faces a Major Overhaul (cont'd)

During the transition, no new conservation authorities can be created, existing boundaries cannot be changed and the ministry can issue binding directions to conservation authorities.

Once consolidation is complete, the new regional conservation authorities will form watershed councils to maintain local expertise in watershed management and planning, and to identify top priorities for programs and services.

The CVC said that it will continue working with its conservation partners to support a smooth transition. According to chief administrative officer Terri LeRoux, "Our focus will be on ensuring continuity so communities continue to receive the programs, services and watershed stewardship they rely on, without disruption."

What do you think about the conservation authority consolidation plan? Leave a comment on the story at inthehills.ca.

— Emily Dickson is an associate editor at In The Hills.

With permission from In The Hills Magazine

Butternut Trees

By Heather Zurbrigg, BGWA member, Director of Species Conservation Forest Gene Conservation Association

Do you have a healthy butternut on your property? The Forest Gene Conservation Association is looking for butternut trees (*Juglans cinerea*) showing signs of resistance to the butternut canker. We are looking for healthy butternut trees to add to our butternut recovery program. This is a great time of year to identify them and determine health status since it's the leaf-on season. If you have a healthy, pure butternut on your property - we'd love to hear about it!! Please connect with us [here](#) to tell us about it. **And don't forget pictures!!!** We need to understand what the leaves, crown, bole, and other features like catkins and seed, look like to determine if it's a **healthy, pure butternut tree!** You can find out more on our website fgca.net and our social media pages.

Also, there is a show on butternut trees that is fun for kids (and kids at heart!), that the Wild Kratts have recently put out. [Check it out!](#)



Butternut grafts at FGCA greenhouse facilities in Kemptville Ontario - photo credit Briana Heuving



A healthy, mature butternut suitable for our archiving program - photo credit Barb Boysen

Nesting Season in Full Swing: GSCA Volunteers Working Hard to Protect Local Turtles

By Chelsea Vieira, Environmental Educator Grey Sauble Conservation Authority

Turtle nesting season is now well underway, and dedicated volunteers across the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority (GSCA) watershed are stepping up to help protect one of Ontario's most vulnerable groups of wildlife.

Each spring and early summer, female turtles leave the safety of wetlands, rivers, and ponds in search of suitable nesting habitat. Unfortunately, many choose to nest along roadsides, trails, and other disturbed areas where their eggs are highly vulnerable to predators such as raccoons, skunks, foxes, and coyotes. In some areas, turtle nests can be predated within hours of being laid.

Through GSCA's Turtle Stewardship Program, community volunteers are helping to give these nests a fighting chance.



When turtle nesting is reported, trained volunteers respond by installing specially designed nest protectors over the nests. These wooden and mesh enclosures prevent predators from digging up eggs while still allowing the nest to receive sunlight and rainfall. Each nest protector also includes a single emergence hole that allows hatchlings to exit safely when they emerge later in the season (typically sometime in the late summer/ early fall). By directing hatchlings away from roads and toward nearby habitat, these protectors help reduce the risk of road mortality during one of the most vulnerable stages of a turtle's life.



The program continues to grow each year thanks to the incredible support of local residents and volunteers. This season, more than 100 volunteers are helping monitor nesting activity and installing nest protectors throughout the watershed. Their commitment and enthusiasm allow GSCA to protect more nests than ever before and expand conservation efforts into new communities.

cont'd

Nesting Season in Full Swing: GSCA Volunteers Working Hard to Protect Local Turtles (cont'd)



A turtle nesting box.

Public participation remains a critical part of the program's success. Residents who observe nesting turtles or discover turtle nests are encouraged to report their sightings. These reports help staff and volunteers respond quickly before predators locate the nest and allow us to identify important nesting hotspots across the region.

Protecting turtle nests is particularly important because turtles face numerous challenges throughout their lives. Road mortality, habitat loss, wetland degradation, and increased predation pressure have contributed to population declines across Ontario. Many turtle species do not begin reproducing until they are more than a decade old, and only a small fraction of hatchlings survive to adulthood. Every successfully protected nest therefore represents an important investment in the future of local turtle populations.

As nesting season continues over the coming weeks, we encourage residents to remain vigilant while travelling near wetlands, rivers, lakes, and other aquatic habitats. If you encounter a turtle on the road, slow down when it is safe to do so and, if possible, help it cross in the direction it was already travelling. Never relocate a turtle to a different area, as turtles rely heavily on their knowledge of local landscapes to survive.

If you find an injured turtle, please contact the Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre at 705-741-5000 or the S.T.A.R.T. Reptile Hotline at 705-955-4284 as soon as possible.

GSCA would like to extend a sincere thank-you to the volunteers, partners, and community members whose dedication is making a meaningful difference for local turtle populations. Together, they are helping ensure that these remarkable species remain part of our landscapes for generations to come.

This program is generously supported by TD Friends of the Environment Foundation, the Jane Goodall Institute of Canada's A.P.E. Fund, Community Foundation Grey Bruce, the Greenbelt Foundation, and the Intersections Wood Collaborative.

To report a nesting turtle or turtle nest, or to learn more about volunteer opportunities with the Turtle Stewardship Program, please contact GSCA at: education@greysable.on.ca. For more information about GSCA's program, visit: <https://www.greysable.on.ca/turtle-stewardship-program/>.

Together, we can help protect Ontario's turtles - one nest at a time.

2006 Mississauga Gypsy Moth Control Program

By Tony Fleischmann, BGWA member

Editor's Note: This is a follow-up article to the presentation at the BGWA Annual General Meeting in March 2026.

The "gypsy moth" (*Lymantria dispar*) has been officially renamed the Spongy Moth in 2022. The name was adopted by scientific bodies including the Entomological Society of America to remove the derogatory reference to Romani people and reflect the insect's sponge-like egg masses. As the Mississauga control project had taken place prior to the name change in 2022, the term gypsy moth is used in description of the program.

The City of Mississauga had been monitoring and working with area residents to control isolated infestations of gypsy moth since the early 1980's. Although there have been fluctuations in gypsy moth population densities over the years, infestations have generally been maintained at tolerable levels. In 2003 and 2004, increases in gypsy moth populations were observed in specific woodlots and residential woodlands resulting in greater tree defoliation. Severe tree damage, however, was limited as the gypsy moth caterpillar numbers were controlled by naturally occurring pathogens. In 2005, as the result of a number of climatic, environmental and insect related factors, increased gypsy moth caterpillar populations survived into adulthood resulting in an unprecedented number of egg masses.

These outbreak populations were predicted to cause severe tree defoliation resulting in extensive tree decline and mortality in several forested areas of the city. As a result, the Mississauga Gypsy Moth Control Program was initiated. A variety of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programs were employed to reduce the gypsy moth densities in the highly infested areas including an aerial application of Btk (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) subspecies *kurstaki* (Foray 48B).



AS355 Twinstar Helicopter with sprayer attachment

cont'd

2006 Mississauga Gypsy Moth Control Program (cont'd)

Detailed egg mass surveys were undertaken in areas of Mississauga where high densities of preferred host species including oaks, aspen, birch and basswoods were common. Survey methodology included egg masses on municipally owned street trees and woodlands along with some privately owned properties where permission was available. The species, size and health of the trees were profiled along with the location, size and number of egg masses per tree. Through this survey process, IPM zones were identified for areas anticipated to be either above or below 50% defoliation. Control measures for areas predicted to be below 50% defoliation included the scrapping off egg masses and the banding and skirting of tree trunks for the removal and destruction of the caterpillars. The aerial spray operation was set up for zones identified to be greater than 50% defoliation. Btk at the time had been used for over 40 years in Canada, is not considered a human health hazard by Health Canada (Pest Management Regulatory Agency) and is only toxic to small group of lepidopteron insects (larvae of moths and butterflies).

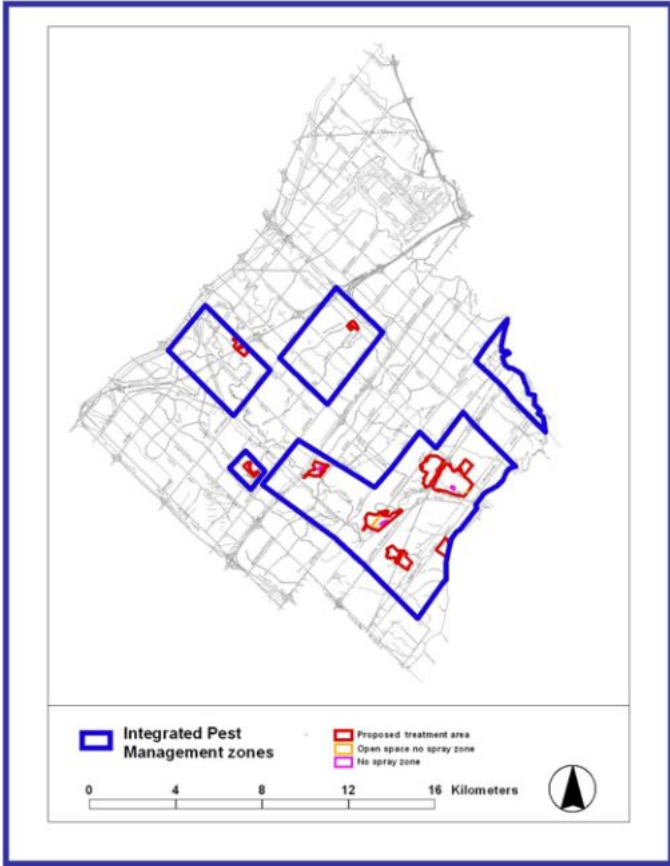
A comprehensive communication strategy was developed and required Alternate Notification Approval from the Ministry of the Environment and included public notices through newsletters, signs, brochures, posters and ads in the newspaper and on the local radio and television stations. An interactive webpage and telephone hotline were also set up for community members to get more information or address any questions or concerns.

A Twinstar helicopter was contracted for the aerial application and required a ministerial exemption from Transport Canada for the operation of an aircraft below restricted altitudes over populated areas. The ministerial exemption required planning and coordination with Peel Regional Police, Ontario Provincial Police, Ontario Ministry of Transportation, Peel Public Health, Ministry of Natural Resources, GO Transit, Mississauga Transit and the Greater Toronto Airport Authority (RCMP). Guidance, leadership and support for the project also came from the Mississauga City Council and from the Forestry, Parks, Transportation and Works, and the Fire and Medical Emergency Departments.

The total aerial application area consisted of ten zones encompassing 498 hectares (1,230 acres). Two applications were required for each of the spray blocks when 50% the gypsy moth caterpillar populations were estimated to be in the 1 instar of development. The total cost of the aerial application program was \$394,266 of which \$223,540 was recovered from 1,782 private property owners at a voluntary payment rate of \$133.87 per property. This represented an approximate 80% cost recovery rate from private landowners. Larger properties were invoiced at a rate of \$876/ha. The total cost of the aerial spray program to the City of Mississauga was \$130,211.

Evaluation of the effectiveness of the gypsy moth control program consisted of the distribution of Btk over the target zones and drift analysis outside of the application areas. Post spray tree defoliation surveys after the remaining caterpillars had pupated and egg mass density surveys in 2006/2007 were also undertaken.

In most of the aerial application areas, over 80% of the tree leaf cover was retained where as 50 to 100% defoliation had been predicted. These success factors were contributed to the fact that the Btk applications were on target, defoliation and tree mortality was significantly less then anticipated and egg masses were reduced to tolerable levels in treatment areas. There was also a very positive public response to control program and the corresponding communication strategy. IPM initiatives outside of the designated spray blocks were also generally effective in maintaining tree defoliation to the objective of less then 50%.



Mississauga Integrated Pest management Zones

2006 Mississauga Gypsy Moth Control Program (cont'd)

The Gypsy Moth Control Program's overall success is attributed to a large group of team members from various organizations including resident associations, City Councillors, staff members, technical stakeholders and regulatory agencies. All of these dedicated and committed people involved in the program helped to significantly reduce and control gypsy moth populations in a safe and responsible manner and save thousands of trees throughout the City of Mississauga.

2026 Update on Spongy Moth, *Lamantria dispar*

By Susan McGowan, BGWA member, BGWA Director

At our 2026 AGM we had the opportunity to hear Tony Fleischmann give his account of the rigours of managing the massive spongy moth spray program that he oversaw in Mississauga in 2006. It seems like an opportunity to give an overview of how the insect has progressed since that time in southern Ontario, from data collected and reported on by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, (MNR) Forest Health, (FH). All of the following graphs and maps are produced by the MNR and these reports can be found on the MNR website. Note: some older slides use the old name for spongy moth, which has been discontinued.

Spongy moth populations occur on a yearly basis and are tracked by the MNR. As Tony mentioned in his presentation, the drier weather leading up to the outbreak was not favourable to the development of biological controls such as the larval fungus *Entomophaga maimaiga* that help to keep spongy moth in check in Aurora District. That fact was noted in the provincial Forest Health Report from 2007.

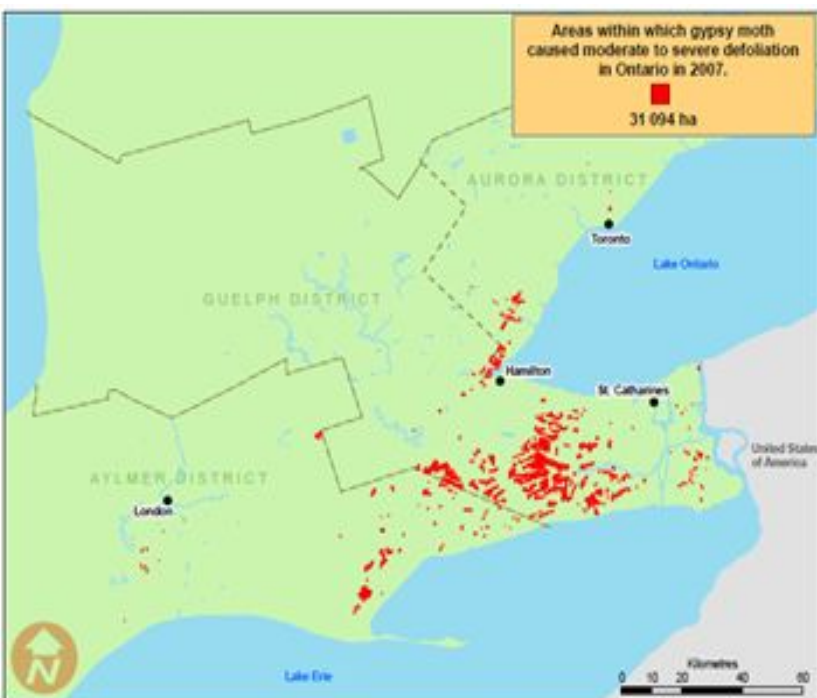


Figure 3.13 Areas within which gypsy moth caused moderate-to-severe defoliation in Ontario, 2007

Although there had been an outbreak in Dufferin County Forest in 2009, populations seemed to subside through southern Ontario for several years.

But in 2017 spongy moth had regained its numbers and was distributed throughout the south with almost 11,000 hectares of moderate to severe to defoliation.

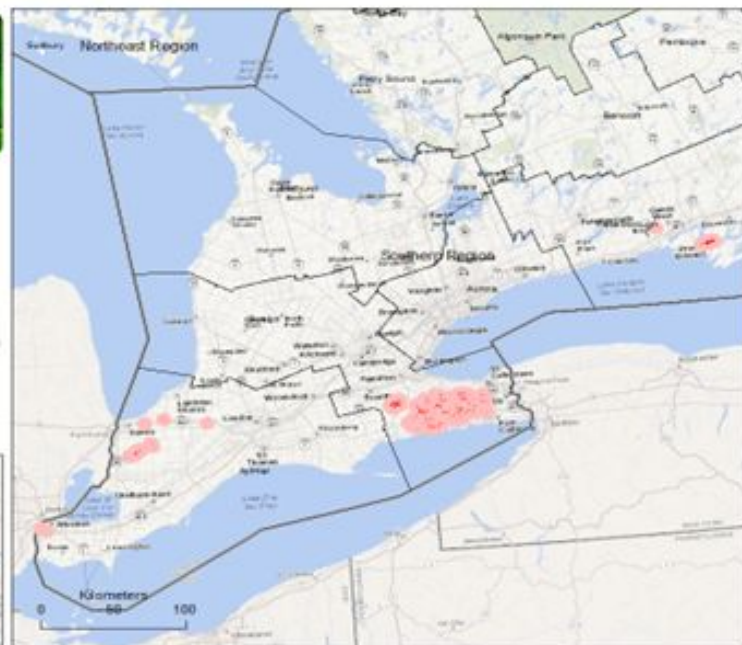


Gypsy Moth 2017

Southern Region
Areas within which gypsy moth caused defoliation

Moderate-to-severe = 10,866 ha

Area of moderate-to-severe defoliation



cont'd

2026 Update on Spongy Moth, *Lymantria dispar dispar* (cont'd)

The population continued to increase from 2017 and reached its peak in 2021.



***Lymantria dispar dispar*
2021**

Areas in Ontario where *Lymantria dispar dispar* caused defoliation

Light = 9,101 ha
Moderate to severe = 1,779,744 ha

Area of light defoliation
Area of moderate to severe defoliation



Figure 3: Ontario spongy moth defoliation in 2021 (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry 2021).

By 2023 the areas of defoliation had been significantly reduced to smaller pockets, in distinct areas, with higher proportions of preferred host: oak. The abundance of biological pathogens such as the fungus *Entomophaga maimaiga*, Nucleopolyhedrosis virus, (NVP), and Hymenoptera egg parasites were responsible for the collapse of the spongy moth infestation as mentioned in Tony's thorough presentation.



**Spongy moth
2023**

Areas in Southern Region where spongy moth caused defoliation

Moderate to severe = 2,529 ha

Area of moderate to severe defoliation



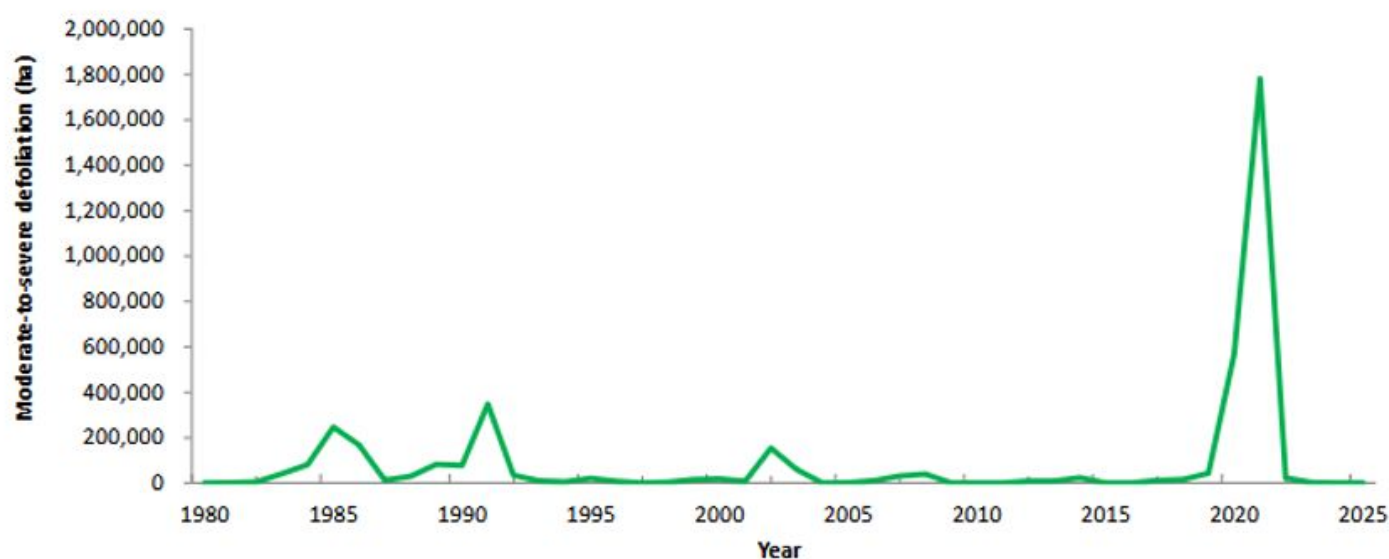
By 2025, no spongy moth defoliation was aerially mapped.

2026 Update on Spongy Moth, *Lamantria dispar dispar* (cont'd)

By 2025, no spongy moth defoliation was aerially mapped.

Region	Area of damage (ha)				
District	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Northwest					
Dryden Fort Frances Atikokan	0	0	0	0	0
Far North	0	0	0	0	0
Kenora	0	0	0	0	0
Nipigon Geraldton	0	0	0	0	0
Red Lake Sioux Lookout	0	0	0	0	0
Thunder Bay Ignace	0	0	0	0	0
Sub Total	0	0	0	0	0
Northeast					
Chapleau Wawa	0	0	0	0	0
Hearst Cochrane Kapuskasing	0	0	0	0	0
North Bay	3,349	0	0	0	0
Sault Ste Marie Blind River	3,641	0	0	0	0
Sudbury	68,875	0	0	0	0
Timmins Kirkland Lake	52	0	0	0	0
Sub Total	75,917	0	0	0	0
Southern					
Aurora Midhurst Owen Sound	273,438	8	0	0	0
Aylmer Guelph	233,454	20,215	2,529	0	0
Kemptville Kingston	454,917	685	0	0	0
Minden Parry Sound Bracebridge	83,332	0	0	0	0
Pembroke	149,053	452	0	0	0
Peterborough Bancroft	509,632	1,066	0	0	0
Sub Total	1,703,827	22,427	2,529	0	0
Provincial Total	1,779,744	22,427	2,529	0	0

Spongy moth populations from 1980 to 2025 are represented on the following graph.



Area (in hectares) of moderate to severe defoliation caused by spongy moth in Ontario, 1980–2025.

The 2025 Annual Forest Health Report is available online now, at <https://www.ontario.ca/files/2026-05/mnr-psd-srb-2025-forest-health-conditions-en-2026-05-12.pdf>

It's a good time to take a look and see what might be on the radar for this year.

And credit where credit's due:

“The information used in this update, is the product of the forest health monitoring program, MNR, in Ontario. This program includes documenting the occurrence of biotic (e.g., insects, disease) and abiotic (e.g., snow and drought damage) disturbances and events. All forested area in the province, regardless of ownership, is monitored and reported on each year.

In 2025, insect diagnostics were executed through a partnership among MNR, the Canadian Forest Service (CFS), and the Invasive Species Centre (ISC). Samples collected by forest health monitoring program staff were identified by ISC staff. The CFS provided laboratory space and access to its historical insect reference collection.

Disease samples were identified at the MNR's Ontario Forest Research Institute (OFRI). Results of the insect and disease collections were entered into a national database managed by CFS.

Maps, tables, and graphs were produced from aerial surveys of major forest disturbances. Results from the annual monitoring program were reported provincially at the Forest Health Review in Barrie and as part of the MNR's Science Insights seminar series, and nationally at the Forest Pest Management Forum in Ottawa and are described in more detail in this report.”

Oak Wilt, *Bretziella fagacearum*

By Susan McGowan, BGWA member, BGWA Director



Photo of oak from Georgian Bluffs Face Book Page.

In June people in the area were shocked to read on the Georgian Bluff Facebook page, that oak wilt (OW) was suspected in a 150 year old English oak which therefore was going to be removed. Thankfully after being notified, inspectors from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) visited the site and determined that the tree was suffering from normal age related decline and not oak wilt. The municipality will now examine the historic oak to see if it can be saved or in the worst-case scenario, some of the tree preserved as a monument.

The CFIA is the authority in Canada to oversee the management of invasive species, plant or animal. When a tree is suspected to be infected with an invasive disease or insect, the plant protection act states that the CFIA must be notified, and the agency will confirm the presence or absence of the disease or pest. And in the case of forestry, if in doubt, the local county office, conservation authority, or Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) would know who to report the finding to. Many invasive species are first noticed by a person who sees something out of the ordinary and calls it in!

First detected in the 1940's in the Upper Mississippi Valley, which runs from Lake Itasca, Minnesota, to the Gulf of Mexico, oak wilt has been confirmed in 24 U.S. states, some of which border Ontario. The first known case of oak wilt in Canada was confirmed in Niagara Falls, Ontario in May 2023. The fungus was also discovered in Township of Springwater, Simcoe County and the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario also in 2023.

Oak wilt is a vascular disease of oak trees and is caused by the fungus *Bretziella fagacearu*. The fungus grows on the outer sapwood of oak trees, restricting the flow of water and nutrients through the tree. The first sign to notice would be early and rapid discolouration of leaves. Some oak species are more vulnerable than others and in severe cases, red oaks could die within 2-6 weeks following infection.

Life Cycle:

The main period of infection occurs during the spring and is the reason for the recommendation that oaks are not pruned from April to November. Sporulating fungal mats which are formed in the fall and spring, attract sap beetles to feed, which in turn spread the spores to healthy trees. The fungus can also spread by root grafting of the infected tree to a healthy tree of the same species.

An important fact is that fungus seems to survive on the above-ground parts of the infected tree for up to one year after the tree has died. Below-ground though on the roots of the dead trees, the fungus can survive much longer (CFIA, 2012). And of course, the fungus can be spread through the transport of infected wood products or nursery stock! Therefore, strict guidelines for the movement of oak products would come into effect in the case of confirmed infected oaks.

Oak Wilt, *Bretziella fagacearum* (cont'd)

Symptoms:

Early dull green, brown or yellow leaves and or leaf drop, cracks in the trunk of dead trees, white, grey or black fungus under bark surface of dead trees. Please see the attached poster from the Invasive Species Centre.

What is being done?

To help prevent the spread of oak wilt, the CFIA is conducting surveys in the affected areas will continue to work with other federal, provincial and municipal governments on communications, surveillance and response planning.

Tree removal will occur if trees are suspected of having oak wilt and/or are in close proximity to oak trees known to be infested. If these controls are not carried out, oak wilt disease may spread. And again, these activities are undertaken by the CFIA.

While it is a slow-moving disease, if oak wilt becomes established, it could have a major impact on Canada's natural resources and forest industries. Oak lumber exports from Canada were worth \$67.5M in 2024. (CFIA)

Sources: Canadian Food Inspection Agency

<https://inspection.canada.ca/en/plant-health/invasive-pests-and-plants/plant-diseases>

Invasive Species Centre Source

<https://www.invasivespeciescentre.ca/invasive-species/meet-the-species/invasive-pathogens/oak-wilt/>

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry <https://www.ontario.ca/page/oak-wilt>

Canadian Forest Service

<https://natural-resources.canada.ca/science-data/science-research/research-centres/great-lakes-forestry-centre>

OAK WILT

(*Bretziella fagacearum*)



Oak wilt is a disease threatening oak trees in Canada. The leaves of infected oaks can start to wilt and drop prematurely, eventually resulting in early leaf drop from the canopy.

Vascular Staining



Signs

- Dark rings (vascular staining) can be seen in the cross-sections of infected branches
- White, grey, or black fungal mats, also referred to as “pressure pads”, just under the bark that sometimes emit a fruity smell

Fungal Mats/Pressure Pads



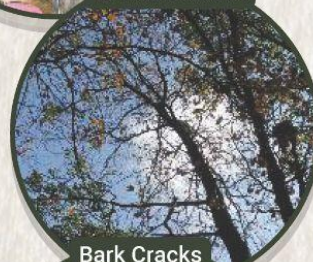
Symptoms

- Wilting and bronzing of the foliage, starting from the top of the tree and moving down
- Discolouration of the leaves, beginning at the leaf margin and progressing to the midrib
- Premature leaf fall
- Vertical bark cracks in the trunk and large branches from the fungal spore mat exerting outward pressure on the bark

Leaf Discolouration/Wilt



Crown Dieback



Bark Cracks



Oak Wilt Look Alikes



Bacterial Leaf Scorch



Bacterial Leaf Scorch



Anthracnose



Anthracnose

What can you do?

- Monitor & identify diseased oak trees
- **DO NOT** prune oak trees from April to November. If pruning occurs or the tree is injured apply a thin layer of wound paint immediately
- **DO NOT** move firewood. Oak wilt is spread by the movement of infected wood
- **If you see signs and symptoms of oak wilt, report sightings to CFIA & EDDMaps**

ID Oak Trees
(*Quercus*)

Bur Oak



Round lobes, deep central indent

White Oak



Round lobes, deep to shallow indents

Northern Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*)



Leaves

Pointed lobes with bristle tips



Buds

Egg-shaped, brownish cluster



Bark

Deep ridges with age

Frothy Bubbles

By Marcia Ranger, BGWA member

Below and attached is a photo I took of some frothy bubbles we saw at the base of a white pine tree.

I googled it and learned that:

Foam running down a pine tree in the rain is normal, and happens when rainwater mixes with air pollutants, natural salts, and the tree's own oils. This creates a natural "soap". As the mixture flows down the rough, furrowed bark, it gets agitated and bubbles up.



Event Recap: Boyd's Crevice Hike

By Lloyd Holbrook, BGWA member, BGWA Director, Events Committee Chair

We had 18 people for our Geology walk with Beth Gilhespie. The weather was sunny and 15 degrees, -perfect April day. Beth is the author of walking through time series of books. We worried about parking but thanks in part to carpooling there turned out to be lots of parking spaces. We headed down the Bruce Trail to Boyd's Crevices. Beth was explaining the red soil, and the rock layers and time frames involved in how these layers formed. Beth showed us many types of fossils including -organ pipes, and chain fossils. She showed and described chert, and shale, -how shale is made from clay, and all about the geological history of the area and how it formed the rocks and the crevices we were walking through. She explained why the crevices form such straight lines. Some areas were so deep and cool that there were still snow piles. Beth's knowledge and enthusiasm are very evident and infectious. There were some wildlife sightings and interesting trees as well. After the hike, Beth did sell some signed copies of her books for a discount price. Everyone seemed to enjoy the hike and learned a great deal. Beth also enjoyed it, and we are planning another Geology hike in early October this year.



Event Recap: Boyd's Crevice (cont'd)



Event Recap: Brant Tract Spring Ephemeral Hike

By Lloyd Holbrook, BGWA member, BGWA Director, Events Committee Chair

On May 19, 17 people attended the spring wildflower (ephemeral) event. It was a joint event with Saugeen Nature - 10 people were BGWA members. Nikki May and Angus Inksetter - both from Saugeen Nature were very capable event leaders. We found a profusion of red and white trillium and trout lilies, and many violets. There were many wild ginger in flower, (these plants flower under the leaves near the soil as ants are the pollinator), some marsh marigold, a few bloodroot flowering, leatherwood, Elderberry, Hepatica, partridge berry and others. Flowers were a little later this year from our cooler than normal weather. However, Nikki could show us many plants (such as May flower, Jack-in the pulpit and many more) that would soon be flowering. We had to speed up our pace to get home for a late lunch. The rain threatened but held off until we were finished. It was great to get out in the woods and see the beautiful displays of spring flowers. Nikki and Angus did a great job of showing us all the plant life that grows under the trees. Everyone enjoyed it. Great to see our Saugeen Nature friends again.



Partridgeberry (*Mitchella repens*)



Event Recap: Dunvegan Farm Tour

By Lloyd Holbrook, BGWA member, BGWA Director, Events Committee Chair

The rain ended right on time and our group of 26 started our tour of Brian Rogers property. Hosted by Brian but also co-led by Forester Dave Wiley. The 170 acres was partly farmland in 1963 but as the land was poor it was all planted to trees. Some areas of red pine, some areas with Scot's pine, some cedar, some white pine plantations and areas of white spruce. As well as the original hardwood forest. The red pine and Scot's pine on this alkaline soil are dying back severely so the red pine was all taken out. Natural reseeding from the surrounding seed trees is working fairly well. The Scot's pine is dying and will be overtaken by cedar. The white pine has been thinned and looks good. Spruce is healthy but maybe not as big as the pine and probably not as valuable. There is a fresh water lake on property, that is very beautiful. One valley at edge of lake has a bur oak ecosystem with some huge oak. The rain held off and we had great discussions on best ways to reseed logged areas and all about thinning practices. Very beautiful property and very informative tour. Thank you to Dave and Brian. (and the other foresters on the tour)



Event Recap: Dunvegan Farm Tour (cont'd)



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