



ABOVE: HARVESTING HEMP, WHICH CAN BE TURNED INTO PULP TO PRODUCE SPECIALTY PAPER
LEFT: AS LONG AS WOOD IS CHEAP AND

Natural Wonders: OUR NATURE RESERVE SYSTEM

Over the past 45 years, Ontario Nature has established the province's largest privately owned network of nature reserves. Today, the organization owns 21 reserves and two conservation easements, which together protect more than 1,600 hectares of some of the best remaining natural areas in Ontario.

That we own and manage so many nature reserves – free of campgrounds, restaurants and other commercial activities – can be largely attributed to the vision and passion of our volunteers and member clubs. April Mathes,

Ontario Nature's stewardship coordinator, says "Some naturalist clubs were formed solely to protect a nature reserve."

In the early sixties, rural land and shorelines were increasingly under threat from development. In response, a small group of Ontario Nature

members banded together to form the Nature Reserve Committee with the intention of setting aside land for protection. Since its first purchase in 1961 (Dorcas Bay, which was sold to Parks Canada in the mid-nineties), the organization determined to focus on protecting four types of habitat across Ontario: wetlands, Great Lakes shorelines, alvars and southern Ontario woodlands.

by **Christine Beevis**

In recent years, Ontario Nature has shifted away from land acquisition to stewardship and management of the reserves. "If you don't take good care of the nature reserves, you're actually jeopardizing them," says Judy Eising, who coordinated Ontario Nature's Land for Nature Program for 15 years. Adds Eising, "I don't think that a lot of these [sensitive ecosystems] would have been protected if it hadn't been for Ontario Nature."



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LEFT: AS LONG AS WOOD IS CHAND PLENTIFUL, TREE-FREE PAPER WILL REMAIN MORE

NATURE RESERVES	SIZE (hectares)	HABITAT TYPE	DATE OF ACQUISITION	LOCATION	IMPORTANT SPECIES FOUND THERE
1 Altberg Wetland	39	Swamp/marsh	1983	East of Fenelon Falls	Trembling aspen, red-osier dogwood, silver maple, ash, spruce, balsam fir
2 Altberg Wildlife Sanctuary	389	Limestone and granite escarpment, hardwood forest and large wetland	1983 (land added in 1994 and 2000)	North of Lindsay, between Norland and Kinmount	Red-shouldered hawk, moccasin flower
3 Lost Bay	43	Provincially significant swamp/marsh and mixed woods	2000	North of Gananoque	Wood duck
4 Stewartville Swamp	8	Swamp and cedar forest, known for its orchids	1985	Arnprior	Hooker's orchid
5 Hay Marsh: John Kerastas Tract	40	Mixed swamp with marsh thicket	1998	St. Joseph's Island (north of Manitoulin Island)	Star flower
6 St. Joseph's Island	40	Cedar swamp and mixed conifer woods	1968	St. Joseph's Island	Arethusa orchid, black-throated green warbler, green adder's-mouth
7 Quarry Bay	391	Alvar with mixed woods and conifer	1995	Manitoulin Island, south shore	Lakeside daisy
8 Baptist Harbour	11	Alvar with small conifer stands	2000	South of Tobermory, west side of Bruce Peninsula	Dwarf lake iris, eastern massasauga rattlesnake
9 Bruce Alvar	67	Alvar surrounded by forest	1993	South of Tobermory, Bruce Peninsula	Lakeside daisy, eastern massasauga rattlesnake
10 Lyal Island	305	Largest island on west shore of Bruce Peninsula. Rocky shore with alvar and forest	1996	Off west side of Bruce Peninsula	Eastern massasauga rattlesnake
11 Petrel Point	23	Shoreline fen and forest	1967 (land added in 1984 and 2003)	Red Bay, bottom of Bruce Peninsula	Showy lady's-slipper, rose pogonia, calopogon and purple fringed orchids
12 Malcolm Kirk	43	Mixed swamp and bog wetland	1972	West of Owen Sound	Stemless lady's slipper, small round-leaved orchid, calopogon, northern green and ragged fringed orchid
13 Kinghurst Forest	280	Large hardwood forest, pine plantation and pasture	1997 (additional land in 1998)	South of Owen Sound (Durham)	Hart's-tongue fern, scarlet tanager
14 George G. Newton	32	Wooded ravine	1982	East of Goderich	Eastern wood peewees, hepatics
15 Lawson Nature Reserve	14	Swamp, fields and hardwood forest	1995	Ingersoll	Virginia bugleweed
16 Harold Mitchell	13	Mature woodlot and wetlands	1970	West of Port Colborne	Indian cucumber-root, ovenbird
17 Wilfrid G. Crozier	4	Forested plateau and sloping cliff face	1973	North of Milton, on the Niagara Escarpment	Walking fern, Selkirk's violet, spotted St. John's wort
18 Willoughby	48	Valley with stream, forested moraine and fields	1986/1989	Caledon	Great horned owl, pileated woodpecker, eastern bluebird
19 Stone Road Alvar	43	Oak savannah and prairie with alvar patches over limestone	1984	Pelee Island	Giant swallowtail, tawny emperor, Acadian hairstreak, hackberry butterfly, sachem skipper, yellow-breasted chat
20 Cawthra Mulock	108	Mixed forest on moraine landscape, creeks, wetland and pasture area	2003	Newmarket	Great horned owl, red-tailed hawk
21 H.N. Crossley	17	Wetland and swamp/bog surrounded by mixed forest	1981	South of Rosseau	White-fringed orchid, Virginia meadow-beauty

Photos: Ontario Nature Archives