

NATURE RESERVES

Malcolm Kirk Nature Reserve

Containing one of the richest segments of the 640-hectare Long Swamp, the Malcolm Kirk Nature Reserve flourishes in a relatively isolated spot at the base of the Bruce Peninsula.

The Federation was able to purchase this biologically rich piece of property for just \$62 per hectare in 1972 after it had been optioned by Nature Reserves Committee member Malcolm Kirk. The reserve, formerly called Long Swamp, was recently renamed in Kirk's honour to mark his tireless involvement in protecting natural areas.

The western portion of the reserve is an open fen that extends into a small lake on an adjacent property. Most of the easterly section is wooded, with the wettest section being a combination of sphagnum mats and stands of black spruce. Sheep Laurel, Pale Laurel, Leatherleaf, and Small Cranberry also grow in one of the few bogs on the Bruce. The woods are also home to Red Maple, Paper Birch, Yellow Birch, White Cedar, Balsam Fir, and Hemlock.

The nature reserve supports an outstanding array of orchids, including four species of Lady's Slipper: Yellow, Ram's Head, Showy, and Stemless. A number of other orchid species can also be found there, including Small, Round-leaved orchid, Dragon's Mouth, Grass-pink, Northern Green Orchis, and Ragged-fringed orchid - a species not commonly seen near the Bruce Peninsula. The reserve also boasts an abundance of Pitcher Plants. During a winter survey in 1972, observers reported seeing "the heads of last season's pitcher plants extending above the 38 inches of snow."

Long Swamp, which is a Provincially Significant Wetland and an Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI), is also a good spot to see many varieties of warblers. Other avian visitors include Pine Grosbeak, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Black-capped Chickadee, and Pileated Woodpecker.

How to get there

The property can be difficult to find and access involves crossing two other landowners' properties. Please contact Ontario Nature for directions.