

The Giant's Rib

Dedicated to increasing awareness and protection of the
Niagara Escarpment World Biosphere Reserve

Stan Nowak, Editor
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Reserve No More!



Now, don't panic! This title may conjure up all kinds of worries on the part of the reader, but fret not... our Niagara Escarpment World Biosphere still retains its status and its wonders... it just won't be a "reserve" anymore. We recently attended a workshop with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO's) Man and the Biosphere (MAB) program. Hosted by the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC), the workshop included escarpment organizations from all over the Rib.

The Niagara Escarpment is celebrating its 25th anniversary as a Biosphere (no reserve...have to get used to that!) and is one of four

biospheres around the globe being used to develop a toolkit which can be used the world over. The toolkit is designed to help people like us simply and easily tell people what a biosphere is and why. The results of these four workshops will be presented later this year at the EuroMAB conference in Estonia.

Even though each biosphere in the world is unique in its own right, the toolkit allows those championing protection to deliver the same message, but gear it to their local needs. The Niagara Escarpment faces different challenges than Long Point or Georgian Bay or the Galapagos Islands, so some of the local messaging will differ, but the biosphere message will remain the same.

The Man and the Biosphere program has always been about people living in significant natural areas in a sustainable manner, benefitting both people and the environment. The message however has been traditionally based in science and focused on environmental protection. In today's world, it is becoming more important to help people understand that it is their interaction with the biosphere that makes it a biosphere. UNESCO's new focus is promoting the relationship with people: to inspire a positive future by connecting people and nature today.

To that end, the word "reserve" is going the way of the Dodo. (Man, I hope all you cool kids know what a Dodo was... Google it if you don't.) Research has found that people find the word "reserve" very restrictive. It feels like it's describing a place you have to stay out of; a fenced off area that's off limits. That's not at all the intended connotation. We want people to visit biospheres; to work, play, and live in biospheres in a respectful, sustainable manner. So, going forward, we'll refer to the Rib as the Niagara Escarpment World Biosphere (no reserve!).

Welcome to the Biosphere!

The other message UNESCO is trying to promote is that we are a part of a global community, linked by the way we treat our special natural places, by how our culture grows and develops from and within them, and how we, as people, are shaped by our natural surroundings. The biosphere family is planet-wide and bridges cultural gaps around the world using the foundation of our common goals.

So while we have a way to go with new biosphere messaging from UNESCO, we can be proud that we have contributed to the continued success of biospheres around the globe. We can also be happy that there

are so many other dedicated people, groups and volunteers around the province helping to protect our Niagara Escarpment... perhaps even the beginnings of a new and refreshed Niagara Escarpment Network?

(Shhhh... that one's still in the works... stay tuned!)



From the blog of Chris Hamilton at giantsrib.ca

The Bruce Duncan Memorial Lecture Series

This series, proudly sponsored by the Giant's Rib Escarpment Education Network, is named in memory of the former General Manager of the Hamilton Conservation Authority and is dedicated to promoting our Niagara Escarpment as an internationally-recognized World Biosphere Reserve and a truly unique topographic element of our natural and cultural heritage.

Next presentation of the Season: Sunday, March 22nd, 2015

Legacy of a Lost Lake: The Living Legacy of Lake Iroquois

With Mark Stabb, Central Ontario Program Director for the Nature Conservancy of Canada.

Legacy of a Lost Lake: The Living Legacy of Lake Iroquois is a celebration of the Lake Iroquois Plain, one of Canada's most populated landforms. Mark will take us on a virtual tour of glacial Lake Iroquois and what it left behind 13,000 years ago when it drained in a massive outburst flood. Despite being heavily developed, the lake plain and its sandy beaches and bluffs are still visible, and still influence society, all around the lake. From Burlington Heights, to the benches of Niagara, to the Scarborough Bluffs and beyond, come to learn about the history and future of this unsung landscape that lies beneath your feet.



Mark Stabb is Central Ontario Program Director for the Nature Conservancy of Canada. Mark has worked in the conservation field since he graduated from the University of Waterloo in 1982, including ten years as a biologist and park planner for the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. Mark has worked as an environmental consultant, and freelance writer and educator. Mark's volunteer activities have included work on both Ontario breeding bird atlases, and work with a number of natural history clubs, land trusts and environmental organizations. Most recently he helped found North Durham Nature, a natural history group based out of Uxbridge, where he currently lives with his wife and two daughters.

The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) is the nation's leading not-for-profit, private land conservation organization, working to protect our most important natural areas and the species they sustain. Since 1962, Ontario and its partners have helped to protect more than 178,000 acres (72,034 hectares).

www.natureconservancy.ca

All presentations will start at 2:00 PM on the last Sunday of every month from October to April at the former Parks Canada Discovery Centre, now administered by the Hamilton Waterfront Trust.

Parking is free, but there is an admission fee of \$5.00 for this presentation.

Door prizes and refreshments will be provided after each presentation along with an opportunity to talk with our guest speakers. Please check our website www.giantsrib.ca for upcoming presentations.

For further information: Sylvia Zsidi sylviaz@cogeco.ca

Art and Photography of the Heritage of the Niagara Escarpment

For the Month of March 2015:

The Photographic Works of Serena Livingston

Wildlife and Nature Photographer **Serena Livingston** is based out of Mississauga, Ontario.

Serena grew up on a horse farm in Grand Valley, Ontario and very early on in her childhood she developed a life-long love and respect for the "Great Outdoors". She enjoys hiking, bird watching, camping (hence her nickname CampCrazy) and of course, photography.

She has dedicated her entire life to helping animals, whether it be through her career, volunteering or her photos.

Serena believes our world is filled with beauty beyond measure and that we can sometimes overlook the simplicity of what has been created and miss the wonder of it all. Her photos capture the concealed treasures of nature that can sometimes be hidden by life's fast pace. With her work she hopes to encourage people to view animals and nature in interesting and exciting new ways.

www.campcrazyphotography.net



Celebrating 'the art' of the natural and cultural heritage of the Niagara Escarpment regularly featuring a local artist at the Dundas Valley Trail Centre, Dundas Valley Conservation Area, 650 Governors Road in Dundas. Saturdays and Sundays only from 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM. Park Entrance is \$9.00 per car, but walk in and bike in is free.

Your parking fee supports the Dundas Valley Conservation Area and can be used towards visiting any other Hamilton conservation area that same day. There is no admission fee to view the exhibit, but donations are gratefully accepted.

Please check our website www.gantsrib.ca in the coming weeks for a complete schedule for all the artists for this season.

For more information: Stephen Landers info@landerscreativecollections.com

Waterfalls along the Niagara Escarpment

by Joe Hollick

Brown's Falls is located in the Waterdown section of Hamilton and is named after a gentleman named Brown, who owned the surrounding lands a century ago. Its flow is derived from natural springs bubbling to the surface and this water then flows through a culvert under the private roadway to the top of Brown's Falls, over the waterfall and into a tributary of the Grindstone Creek called Spring Creek.

Brown's Falls is a Ribbon Falls with a height of 5 metres (16 ft.) and a crest width of 1.2 metres (4 ft.). It's flow is seasonal, thus try to view it during the winter snow melt or after a rainfall. Its coordinates are 43° 20' 10.96" N 79° 53' 15.33" W

Brown's Falls is located on private property, however it is visible from the end of a public roadway. To view Brown's Falls, take Dundas St. to the community of Waterdown. Then take George St. (which is the second road east of Mill St.) to the south (escarpment side). George St. will take a 90 degree turn easterly and becomes a private roadway along this

section. If you stand at the end of the public roadway, most likely you will see two waterfalls, Spring Falls which is larger and located under a wooden bridge at the end of the ravine. The smaller Brown's falls is located on the south side of the ravine about 50 m before Spring Falls.



Happy Waterfalling!

Giant's Rib Photo of the Month



Okay, this is a little different than the usual GR 'Photo of the Month', but after reading this article from our Facebook site, you'll never look at a misshapen tree the same way ever again – at least not without thinking: 'what happened here, *who* was here, all those many centuries ago?'

Ever seen a weird-looking tree anywhere along the Niagara Escarpment? There are scores of them, especially along trails that may have been used by our native brethren centuries before our European ancestors ever came across The Big Pond!

There are a lot of hidden stories and mysteries in our Niagara Escarpment that are waiting to be discovered – or re-discovered! Read this article, then take a walk through the woods, read the landscape – and listen to the stories it tells!

These Trees Have Secret Native American Codes. Their Meaning? Brilliant!

By Cassandra Lewis

Have you ever been walking through the woods and noticed an oddly shaped tree? If you're like me, chances are you probably didn't give it any thought and simply continued on your way.

But once you learn about about Dennis Downes, I guarantee you'll *never* look at trees the same way again!

For nearly 30 years, Dennis has been touring America's countryside, searching for and documenting unique trees.

He's even built a special society around them!

But these trees, totally inconspicuous save for their strange shapes, have a *very* special place in America's history — and serve a fascinating purpose! Over 100 years ago, these trees were purposefully bent, and their odd shapes communicate very important messages.

But these trees aren't as rare as you might think! They can actually be found all around the country — perhaps even in your own backyard! *For a special tutorial on how to spot these amazing trees, be sure to watch Dennis' video at the bottom of this article at the Giant's Rib Facebook site!*

Have you ever seen anything like this? I certainly hadn't! But I'll be on the lookout next time I'm taking a walk through the woods!



Source: www.facebook.com/GiantsRib

Come Join the Giant's Rib Discovery Centre!



**Do you love the
Escarpment too ?**

The Discovery Centre Needs Your Help!

Are you interested in the Niagara Escarpment World Biosphere Reserve? Do you want to learn more about it and contribute to its protection?

Volunteering with the Giant's Rib is one way you can do that. We have positions available for volunteers on weekends at the Centre, and Director openings as well. We're growing and expanding, so if you're excited about the Niagara Escarpment, this is the place to be.

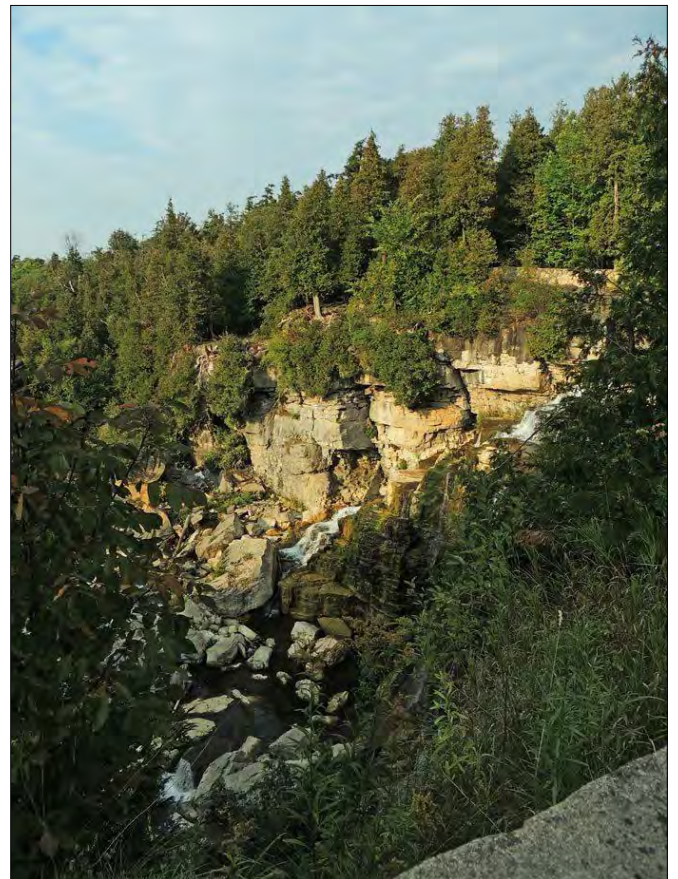
Please visit www.giantsrib.ca to learn about available positions.

About the GRDC

The Giant's Rib Discovery Centre tells the story of the Niagara Escarpment through interpretation at the Centre on weekends and through our public outreach programs. These include a weekend Arts and Photography Series featuring a local artist each month, guided interpretive hikes, the Bruce Duncan Memorial Lecture Series, and we offer a Grade 4 curriculum-based Rocks and Minerals unit to elementary schools free of charge.

We require interpretive volunteers to work half-days on weekends at the Centre (located within the Dundas Valley Conservation Area at 650 Governor's Road in Dundas) and co-ordinators to manage public programs and support our annual fundraiser in June.

For detailed descriptions, please visit www.giantsrib.ca



**If you are interested in any of these positions,
or if you have a specific skill set you feel may assist us,
please contact Chris Hamilton at chamilton@giantsrib.ca**



Your Giant's Rib Discovery Centre's Board of Directors for 2014 - 15

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