

LONG POINT BASIN  
LAND TRUST  
VIEWPOINT  
FALL WINTER 2020



President's Message  
*Peter Carson*



**I** often get caught up in local environmental issues

and projects and forget the bigger picture, **the World or Planet**, on which my very existence and our species, and all others' continued survival depends.

Recently I ran across some information from the United Nations which reminded me that I am, as a practicing restorationist, actually part of a bigger picture movement that at least some people on this planet are embracing. Given that you are reading this I would venture to suggest that you are part of this movement too.

“The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (which is due to launch in 2021) aims to **prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems on every continent and in every ocean**. It can help to end poverty, combat climate change and prevent a mass extinction.”

The UN suggests that ecosystem restoration needs to be all encompassing: everything from mountains to oceans, forests, savannas,

farmland, and even cities. The UN goes on to suggest that these actions need to be all inclusive when it comes to people too. To me, this makes a whole lot of sense. We all know the problems associated with every one of these different environments, and I don't have any problem thinking of greening of cities or protecting and improving farmlands as restoration. This broad perspective from the UN is one of the key tenets of LPBLT's mission - the work we do on a local scale right here at home is an important piece of the larger global restoration puzzle.

Check it out: UN Decade on Restoration - [www.decadeonrestoration.org](http://www.decadeonrestoration.org)

*Ecosystems support all life on Earth. The healthier our ecosystems are, the healthier the planet – and its people.*

## Ecological Services on LPBLT Nature Reserves

Peter Carson

**W**e all know and appreciate the protection of biodiversity that LPBLT nature reserves are set up to give, but often the greater variety of benefits are overlooked. In a 1992 list in *Functions of Nature*, R.S. de Groot suggested 37 possible services that natural areas could provide. These functions are now referred to as “Ecological Services” and cover such things as recreational opportunities, reduction of flooding, protection of water quality, provision of habitat for species both rare and common, prevention of soil erosion and sediment control, formation of topsoil, and maintenance of soil fertility. Not to mention a couple that have become much more relevant to our everyday lives: the protection of pollinators, and the provision of spaces for people to get out of doors and recharge from our COVID – 19 impacted lives.

To show the importance of these services and to make the case for additional and more stringent protection of our nature areas, dollar values have been attached to functions. The storing of carbon is one service that most of us are aware of, and the controversy that surrounds the assigned value highlights some of the difficulties that arise on evaluating these services.

I was curious, even with the potential pitfalls on assigning values, what sort of estimate might be attributed to the lands that Long Point Basin Land Trust holds; so I went through a very rough exercise to shed some light on this. I divided each of the nature reserves into four land types: Forest, Old Field, Stream Corridor, and Wetland. I then applied the values used in an old report<sup>1</sup> prepared for the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, which was focused on southern Ontario - making it a good, but not perfect match. The final annual figure adjusting for inflation is \$ 3,035,019.00 on our 273 hectares. An average of **\$11,117 per hectare per year**. What an amazing return on our investment!

It is evident that conserving land for species conservation, though absolutely vital, is just one of many benefits we get when we just “let nature be”.

We really do tend to take clean air and water for granted. It is humbling, yet empowering, to realize that our own actions can make a difference. That is why LPBLT does what it does – and we ask that our readers and supporters help with our mission in any way you can.

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<sup>1</sup>Estimating Ecosystem Services in Southern Ontario, Spatial Informatics Group, Austin Troy & Ken Bagstad (2009) for Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, report



Mary Gartshore

Trout Creek Nature Reserve - protecting a section of the Trout Creek cold water stream system. Tulip-tree Silkmoth.

## Wow – Where did the time go?

Reflections on 25 Years

Peter Carson

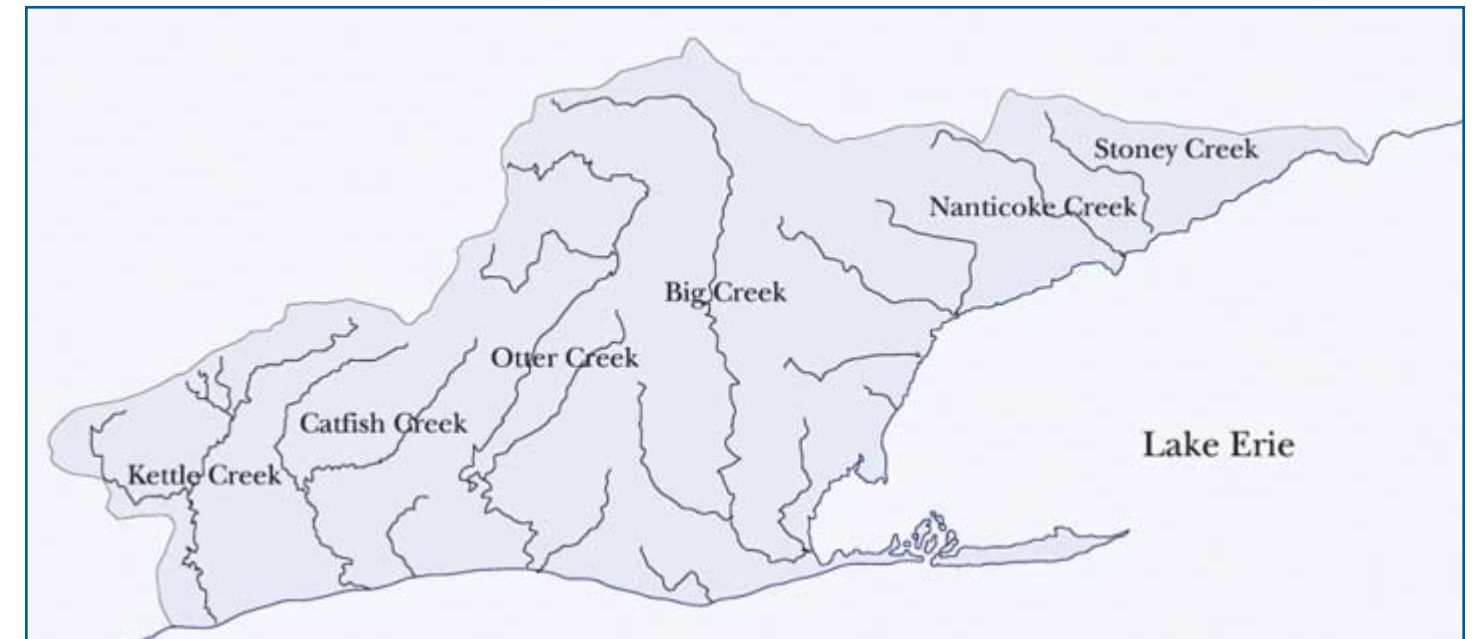
**L**ong Point Basin Land Trust is about to celebrate its 25<sup>th</sup> birthday. As the last engaged founding member of the Land Trust, I look back on this quarter century with many fond memories, and amazement at what we have accomplished.

It all started because a small group, (Arthur Langford, Al & Pat Robinson, Ken McMullen, Jim & Joan Harlow, and Mary Gartshore and me), felt that there was a need for an additional conservation option in the Long Point area: An option that focused on the preservation of habitat, species and natural processes. Over a six-month period, we met, planned and received approval and charitable status for Long Point Basin Land Trust.

The choosing of the name for the organization was one of the most time consuming of our tasks. We felt that the name needed to reflect the area that we chose to focus efforts in, but at the same time should garner recognition from a broad audience. Long Point certainly fit some of the requirements, but it wasn't

until we looked at a map that we realized that the health of Long Point relies on the water that encompasses it; and the quantity and quality of this water is directly tied to the major watersheds providing the water. It didn't take much of a leap to identify the geographic working areas of the Catfish Creek, Kettle Creek, and Long Point Region Conservation Authorities as the source of these waters - and by luck we found this area described as a basin. Now Arthur, always the professor and a stickler for fact and exactness, quickly pointed out that this term 'basin', as applied in this case was factually incorrect. After some arm wrestling, he capitulated, given that we didn't come up with the term but rather 'borrowed' it, so the mistake wasn't actually ours. Hence Long Point Basin Land Trust was born.

Over the next year LPBLT will be celebrating its accomplishments and honouring the many people who have served with and supported the organization. We hope that you will join us in this!



Map of the Long Point Basin

## Scales and Scutes: Reptiles in the Carolinian Region

Stephen Kilbridge

**O**ur mission at LPBLT is to protect habitat in the Long Point Basin. And no group is in greater need of protection than Reptiles. In our region, that includes turtles and snakes.

The Carolinian region is a biodiversity hotspot and is home to almost all of Ontario's reptile species: seven types of turtles, as well as 12 snake species. It is evident how important the region is to reptile conservation in Ontario. But, virtually all reptile species are declining globally, and we are not exempt from this trend. All of our turtles and half of our snake species are at risk.

Why this dire situation? The reasons include reptile biology and many forms of human interference.

Reptiles, having evolved slowly over millions of years to live in specific environments, are unable to adapt to the rapid change introduced by humans.

Turtles, which can be long-lived, may not reach sexual maturity for ten years or more. Nests are often predated by raccoons (and, sadly, people as well). Many turtles travel to nesting areas, a trip that can be deadly when crossing roads. Habitat loss due to development, loss of wetlands and nesting sites is another stress. Natural predation of hatchlings is yet another hurdle. And illegal collection for the pet trade is another big problem. As a result of all these, turtles have a hard time

maintaining their numbers or recovering from losses.

Snakes also suffer from nest predation, killing as a result of human prejudice, and habitat loss. The fact that their body temperature depends on the environment leads them to bask in warm places – such as roads – which leads to high mortality from roadkill.

The Land Trust has taken positive action to protect reptiles through habitat protection, education, and creation of reptile habitats such as snake nesting boxes and snake hibernacula (underground overwintering habitats built to give snakes protection), on and off our nature reserves.

We urge you to support our efforts as we continue to acquire land for conservation. Our focus is on land with high habitat value for species such as reptiles.

Please consider purchasing our excellent guidebook, “Conserving Carolinian Reptiles – A Biodiversity Handbook”, which is packed with useful information and is available on our website. And you can download our factsheets on snake and turtle identification, improving turtle habitat, and building hibernacula, at no charge.



Mary Gartshore

Reptiles need a helping hand.  
It's up to us

VIEWPOINT

## 2020: The Year of Exploring the Virtual World Outdoors

Joelle Chille Cale

**T**his year, LPBLT realized people needed nature more than ever, even if it was through a screen. Despite the drastic change in plans for the Explore the Outdoors 2020 program, we adapted our events to work online. Out of adversity comes opportunity though – this was our most successful season yet! We hosted 11 virtual presentations with exciting, interactive topics like field sketching, backyard bird ID, and mushroom identification. Of the over 2300 participants, 92% said they would attend another one of our events!

“The speaker was so passionate it made me really excited to learn more!”

If you missed out on any of the events and would like to catch up on them, most have been recorded and put up on our YouTube at channel. Registrants get first access to the videos immediately after the event, but make sure you subscribe so you don't miss anything else we have coming down the pipeline!

We hope to be back even bigger and better with Explore the Outdoors 2021. Do you have any ideas for webinars, do you want to help with planning, or do you know a company that would like to be a sponsor? Connect with me at [development@longpointlandtrust.ca](mailto:development@longpointlandtrust.ca) or 519-331-7020.

“Thank you for doing this; it's such a welcome opportunity to learn more about this area.”

For more information about either Explore the Outdoors 2020 or to stay informed as to the plans for 2021, visit [www.longpointlandtrust.ca/events](http://www.longpointlandtrust.ca/events).

Events were made possible through the generous support of personal donations, local businesses, and organizations.

VIEWPOINT

**EXPLORE THE OUTDOORS 2020**

**Explore the Outdoors 2020 was a HUGE SUCCESS!**  
Our 2020 events looked a little different this year - they were all virtual!

We had even greater success than last year, and we couldn't have done it without you!

**11 EVENTS**  
With topics like Gardening with Native Plants and Mushroom ID

**2300+ REGISTRANTS**  
from as far as Dubai and the UK, but most were from right here in Ontario

**165 HOURS OF LEARNING**  
And you can watch most of the recordings on our YouTube channel

**92% WOULD ATTEND ANOTHER**  
And they were true to their word! We had many repeat attendees.

## Stewardship Shorts

**Nuts in the Ground** – Volunteers planted a variety of tree seeds, including Black Oak, American Hazel, American Plum, and Dwarf Chinquapin Oak at **Spring Arbour Farm Nature Reserve** in September. This stewardship work was in line with the nature reserve's property management plan to transition this block into tallgrass prairie and oak savanna.

**Oak Savanna Restoration** – As part of the property management plan for **Trout Creek Nature Reserve**, extensive management in selected portions

of the reserve will be carried out beginning this fall. The first phase will involve the removal of conifers, including Red Pine, Norway Spruce, and Scots Pine, which had been planted for timber production over the past sixty years. None of these are native to the area. In addition, some of the White Pine plantations will be removed. The management objective is to restore the original oak savanna landscape in parts of the reserve. Trout Creek Nature Reserve is a large 78-hectare (193-acre) complex property; large sections, which include the creek valley and old-growth White Pine, will be untouched by this restoration.



Mary Garrishore

Planting nuts at Spring Arbour Farm Nature Reserve.

## Protected Land: Are We Doing Enough?

Stephen Kilbridge

**H**ow much land needs to be protected to protect biodiversity? (Not to mention all the other “ecological services” – such as clean air and water – which natural areas provide.) If you look around Norfolk County for example, which is well-forested compared to other parts of southern Ontario, it may seem that we live in a park-like area. Most land here, though, is privately owned, and subject to the owners' whims in terms of management. How much ecologically rich land is permanently protected for the public good?

The Government of Canada has been supporting a United Nations initiative calling for 17% of our land and water to be designated as protected areas. The government has recently pledged that these goals are to be increased to 25% by 2025, and to 30% by 2030. Ambitious but necessary goals, if one considers the perilous state of many species worldwide. But they are also ambitious goals not yet reached; currently,

Canada's protected areas are 12.1% of our land and 13.8% of our marine territory.

How does the Long Point Basin compare to the national picture? Biologically diverse, and nestled in the most densely populated area of Canada, with the resulting pressures of development, does this area deserve at least as much land set aside for nature as the rest of Canada?

The numbers show that we can do better. Of the Long Point Basin's 382,366 hectares (944,846 acres), approximately 12,140 ha (30,000 ac) is “protected” land. This seemingly large number is less than 4% of the area, and woefully short of the national targets.

As a society, we **can** do more. The Land Trust is working constantly and tirelessly toward the goal of protecting more habitat-rich land for nature.

Won't you help us, through your financial support? This could be a tax-deductible donation, bequest, or a donation of land. Every bit helps.

Local forest to be restored by removing exotic conifers.

Arrow-leaved Violet.



Mary Garrishore

## It Pays To Protect Nature

**T**hink of the world as infrastructure. Nature is “green infrastructure,” and anything man-made is “gray infrastructure.” Green infrastructure provides important services like clean air to breathe, water to drink, fertile soil to grow our food, and protection from floods and storms. These lands, waters, and other natural resources need our protection. That's what LPBLT does. But we can't commit to protection for us and future generations without long-term financial investments.

LPBLT needs gifts in wills, gifts of securities, and other planned gifts. These gifts – from people like you – provide critical funds to conserve wild species and green spaces.

Please consider LPBLT when you are planning your yearly giving, as well as in your will.  
Preserve your legacy with LPBLT.



## LPBLT Supporters

We would like to thank the many individuals who have generously supported LPBLT's acquisition of nature reserves, on-going stewardship efforts, and outreach programs.

We would also like to thank the following foundations and agencies for their support of our conservation projects:

This project was undertaken with the financial support of:  
Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier de :



Environment and  
Climate Change Canada

Environnement et  
Changement climatique Canada



An agency of the Government of Ontario  
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario