

Protecting Natural Areas



in the City of Woodstock



April 1998

Natural areas are not as common in our landscape as they once were. It is important that we do all we can to protect those that remain. If you live next to or visit a natural area in the City of Woodstock, there are things you can do to protect it and reduce your impact. Here are some simple guidelines.



Living Next to a Natural Area:



Compost your yard and garden waste. Dumping it in a natural area can smother natural vegetation. Some garden plants and seeds from food waste may begin to grow in the natural area and force native plants out.

Choose plants for your gardens and flowerbeds very carefully. Some plants are invasive and very aggressive. Plants from your garden can spread to the natural area and choke out native species. Try planting native species in your flowerbeds; they are better adapted to the local conditions. Avoid plants such as purple loosestrife, periwinkle and goutweed, and trees such as Norway maple.

Call the City of Woodstock Engineering Department at 539-2382 ext. 814 for more information on proper disposal of your paint, oil and other chemicals.



Dispose of household garbage and hazardous waste properly. Do not dump it in a natural area as it may contain harmful chemicals and will smother natural vegetation. Do not pour chemicals down a storm sewer. Oil, paint and other chemicals are extremely toxic and will eventually reach a waterway or wetland via stormwater drains.

Know where your property line is and do not mow into the natural area. Leave a buffer or space of two metres between the natural area and your lawn, if possible.



Save money and the environment by changing the way you maintain your lawn and garden. Even if your property is not near a waterway, pesticides and fertilizers can seep down into the groundwater. Try the following alternatives:

- ũ Add compost to your lawn to fertilize it.
- ũ Use a mulching lawnmower.
- ũ Plant native groundcovers rather than grass. They are better adapted to this area and require less maintenance.
- ũ Try nontoxic methods of pest control such as manual pulling of weeds.

Approximately 10 times more pesticides are used on city lawns than are applied on an equal area of farmland.

Do not remove fallen or rotting trees and branches from the natural area. They provide many homes for wildlife.

Natural Areas:

Wetlands, meadows, forests, valley lands and other relatively undisturbed lands that are home to many different plant and wildlife species.



Visiting a Natural Area:

Please be aware of and observe permitted uses in the City of Woodstock's natural areas. Motorized vehicles are not allowed. Some passive recreational activities are permitted. Know the boundaries of public land, and avoid using private lands without permission.

Follow marked trails only. Side trails and unmarked trails are not always safe. In addition, too many trails increase our impact on the natural area through trampling and soil compaction. Avoid hiking or biking through wet or muddy areas to prevent erosion and soil loss.

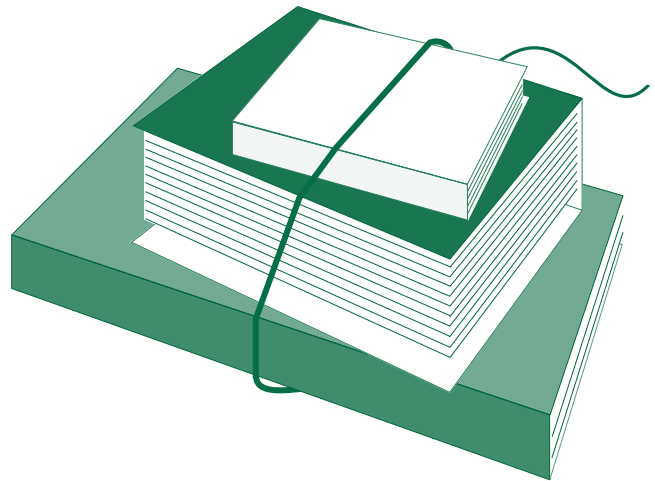
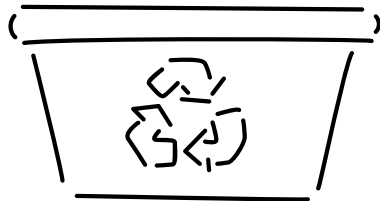
Report any unsafe conditions, such as falling trees or dumped garbage, to the City of Woodstock Works Department at 539-2382 ext. 814. Report any suspicious or unsafe activities to the Woodstock Police Department at 421-2800.

Please keep your cat and dog on a leash, as they sometimes chase or kill wildlife. Remember to stoop and scoop.

Do not pick or remove plants and animals from a natural area. The natural area is the best place for these species to live.

Thank you for putting garbage in its place: a trash can or a recycling bin. Pick up any litter that you find.

To minimize the impact on the Brick Ponds Wetland Complex, no trails have been established there. Please do not hike through the wetland. For more information, refer to the brochure *Brick Ponds Wetland Complex: Woodstock's Natural Treasure*. Copies are available from the City of Woodstock at 539-1291.



Books and Brochures:

- *Landscaping for Wildlife* - 18-page booklet from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (1990). Call 1-800-667-1940.
- *The Ontario Naturalized Garden* - book by Lorraine Johnson (1995). Available at most bookstores.
- *Restoring Nature's Place: A Guide to Naturalizing Ontario Parks and Greenspace* - by J-M Daigle and D Havinga (1996). Published by Ecological Outlook Consulting and Ontario Parks Association. Call OPA to order at (416) 426-7157.
- *How to Get Your Lawn and Garden Off Drugs* - by Carole Rubin (1989). Published by Friends of the Earth.
- *Living With Natural Areas: A Guide for Citizens of London*. Brochure produced by the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA), City of London Ecological and Environmental Policy Advisory Committee (EEPAC), and Celebrate the Thames (1996). Contact UTRCA at (519) 451-2800.

This brochure was produced by the Brick Ponds Education Program Committee:
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