

# Help Protect our Rare and Endangered Wildlife

By Beth Gilhespy

**A**s 2025 draws to a close, the future of Ontario's natural heritage hangs in the balance. Across the globe, species are disappearing at a rate more than 1,000 times faster than nature intended - an alarming sign of an escalating environmental crisis. Here in Ontario, the loss of habitat remains the greatest danger to our rare and endangered wildlife.

At a time when environmental protections are scaling back and public lands sold or developed, land trusts remain a steady, permanent safeguard for the places and species we love. Independent and charitable, land trusts like Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy (EBC) ensure that wetlands, forests, shorelines, and alvars are protected forever.

This year, EBC's Wild Future Campaign has a goal to secure nearly 1,000 acres of sensitive and vulnerable landscapes along the Niagara Escarpment and surrounding regions. These natural spaces filter our water, store carbon, and provide homes for threatened species. Protecting them isn't just conservation, it's a gift to every generation that follows.

The opportunity is urgent and extraordinary: from Owen Sound to the Saugeen Bruce Peninsula to Manitoulin Island, we are protecting wetlands, woodlands, rocky heights, gentle fens and alvars. Many of these properties are adjacent to other preserved land, creating larger, more robust and resilient landscapes. Others are distinct, precious parcels of land with sensitive and vulnerable features that need our protection.

Here's a glimpse of what we will protect:

**Benallen:** 365 acres of forest and wetland near Owen Sound, adjacent to a 233-acre wetland and forest lands we preserved in 2024

**Otter Lake:** 100 acres of meadow, forest and wetland - habitat for Bobolinks, Eastern Meadowlarks, and even a resident Black Bear family

**Tamarack Corner:** A stunning 20-acre fen and alvar complex on the Saugeen Bruce Peninsula, home to tamaracks and showy Lady's Slipper Orchids.

**Sucker Lake Ridge:** A magnificent Escarpment ridge on Manitoulin Island (Mnidoo Mnising) with prized dolostone caprock that would be vulnerable to quarrying, and sensitive fern species.

The value of the land and additional costs total \$3.8 million but with donations and grants received, our fundraising target for year-end is now \$1.5 million. We have made great strides this fall 2025 but we need your help! By making your year-end gift now, you can help preserve 1,000 acres of wetlands, woodlands, and shorelines - critical refuges for Ontario's most vulnerable wildlife.

Your generosity this holiday season can secure clean air, safe water, and thriving habitats for decades to come. Let's make a gift of nature and close the year by protecting the land we cherish, forever.

Donate today at [bit.ly/wildfuture2025](http://bit.ly/wildfuture2025), email [beth@escarpment.ca](mailto:beth@escarpment.ca), or call 437-331-1341 to make your year-end gift for a Wild Future.

*Beth Gilhespy is Chief Executive Officer of Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy.*



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