

Bannockburn Wildlife Area

A. Introduction

Bannockburn Wildlife Area is a 61 acre property in the Stanley Ward of the Municipality of Bluewater. Since it was purchased, management activities have focussed on providing wildlife habitat while protecting the Bannockburn River valley. It is a good example for landowners who want to convert poor quality farm land to a natural area. It is listed in an Ontario catalogue of environmental demonstration areas. Bannockburn Wildlife Area's diverse ecosystems and varied topography have made it a popular recreation area for nature appreciation, hiking and education. The development of privies, boardwalks, bridges and well-defined trails protect the environment from human activity.

B. Goal

To restore and protect the Bannockburn River valley while providing an area for recreation and nature appreciation

C. Objectives

1. To enhance the Bannockburn River subwatershed
2. To provide habitat for terrestrial and aquatic species
3. To improve water quality in the Bannockburn River and Bayfield River
4. To provide an area for recreation and nature appreciation
5. To provide an area for research and scientific study
6. To demonstrate sound conservation practices

D. Action Plans

The existing management techniques achieve the property's goal of restoring and protecting the Bannockburn River Valley while providing an area for recreation and nature appreciation. The following action plans focus on development that will further protect the ecosystem from people and manage the evolving ecosystems for diverse wildlife.

1. Change the designation to “Conservation Area” to reflect the visitor use.
2. Install boardwalks along trails in wet areas
3. For visitor services, install steps on the back trails, benches and directional signage along the trails and a small trail map at the parking lot.
4. Place the trail guide on the ABCA website with link from Huron County and Ontario Trails websites.
5. Develop a publication (print and website) to educate landowners about good stewardship practices demonstrated at Bannockburn.
6. Thin the conifer plantations to facilitate the conversion to a hardwood forest.
7. Selectively remove shrubs and trees from the marsh near the parking lot to increase habitat diversity.
8. Develop partnerships with community groups and/or establish a “Friends of Bannockburn” group.
9. If available, acquire land to further protect the Bannockburn River Valley.
10. Update inventories and assessments of terrestrial and aquatic habitats.