

Welcome!

Conservation Areas Workshop Site Visit

Minesing Wetlands Conservation Area

October 25, 2017

Your trip today will take you to the 6,000 hectares Minesing Wetlands. The wetlands are home to a diverse array of habitats, including fens, marshes and swamps that support a network of sensitive flora and fauna, some rare or endangered.

Minesing Wetlands is designated as a wetland of international importance by the RAMSAR Convention on Wetlands. It represents one of the largest and most diverse undisturbed wetland tracts in Canada.

Stop 1— Minesing Wildlife Viewing Tower (10:30 am)

Concession 2 Sunnidaile Rd., near Angus

From Hwy 400 in Barrie, take the Dunlop Rd. West exit. Take Dunlop (CR 90) west towards Angus. Turn right onto McKinnon Rd. and then the first left onto Concession Rd. 2 Sunnidaile. The tower will be on your right (travel time ~ 20 mins from hwy).

Stop 2— Fort Willow Conservation Area (12:00 pm)

2714 Grenfel Rd., Minesing

From the Minesing Viewing Tower, take Concession 2 and McKinnon back to CR 90. Turn left and continue to Pinegrove Rd. (CR 40). Just at the top of the rise on CR 40, turn left on Grenfel Rd. and follow it past the train tracks. Fort Willow is on your left (travel time ~ 20 mins).

Stop 3— Willow Creek Canoe Corral (optional, after lunch)

2957 George Johnston Rd.

Turn left out of the parking lot and follow Grenfel Rd. (which becomes Portage Trail). Turn left on George Johnston Rd. The canoe corral is on your left (travel time ~ 5 mins).

You will need proper (closed toe, flat, comfortable) footwear to enjoy this tour.

Washrooms are available at Fort Willow Conservation Area.

If at any time you get separated or lost, contact Kyra Howes at 705-309-0405.



Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority

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Minesing

A Wetlands for All Seasons

This map is not for navigation purposes.

On the tour...

Stop 1— Minesing Wildlife Viewing Tower

The three-metre high viewing tower offers a bird’s eye view of the wetland and its inhabitants. With the Mad River winding northwest to converge with the Nottawasaga River, this area experiences flooding in the spring, attracting a myriad of waterfowl.

At this stop, we’ll be discussing several projects, including:

- About Minesing Wetlands - natural heritage, acquisition, partnerships
- Recreation - moving to a smart phone based payment system
- Wetlands Creation Project - from hay to herons!
- Mad River Flow Restoration - repairing breeches to enhance aquatic habitat and avoid infrastructure damage

Stop 2— Fort Willow Conservation Area

Fort Willow is recognized as both a national and provincial historic site. Established at the half-way point between Kempenfelt Bay and the Nottawasaga River, the fort enabled a continuous trade and transportation route from Lake Ontario through to Georgian Bay. During the War of 1812, the British military used the fort as a strategic supply depot along the Nine Mile Portage route at a time when the lower lakes were occupied by the Americans.

We’ll stop for lunch here, and discuss the opportunities and challenges of managing conservation lands of historic value.

Stop 3— Willow Creek Canoe Corral

Willow Creek and the Nottawasaga River offer wonderful opportunities for short visits or longer trips, and a chance to spot some of the many waterfowl species that call this area home. A series of hiking trails are found in and around the wetlands, all of them offering unique glimpses into this wetland and its inhabitants.

For those joining us at this optional, post-lunch, stop, we’ll be discussing several projects, including:

- NVCA’s hunting program
- Emergency managements plans and way-finding signs in the Minesing
- Re-wiggle the Willow project - creating meanders with bioremediation and lots of volunteers!

Learn more about the Minesing Wetlands and Historic Fort Willow at www.nvca.on.ca/recreation/

Wetlands Creation Project—Minesing Wetlands Conservation Area, Concession 2 Sunnidale



Initial Site— June 2016
The hay from the site was last harvested in the late 90s



Pond completion— December 2016
Transporting the material off site was the most significant project cost, the innovative contractor created “islands” to deposit clay increasing habitat diversity



Spring Flooding—April 2017
Spring flooding was significantly higher this year, but high waters brought an influx of migratory birds to the site



After one growing season—September 2017
Trees and shrubs have been planted around the site to further increase habitat potential



Annual Festival at Fort Willow see re-enactors bring to life the history of this national historic site.



In 2016, Parks Canada designated Willow Depot and the Nine Mile Portage as a national historic site.

Mad River Flow Restoration Project—Concession 2 Sunnidale



Northern (downstream) breach site (2015) - looking east (pre construction)



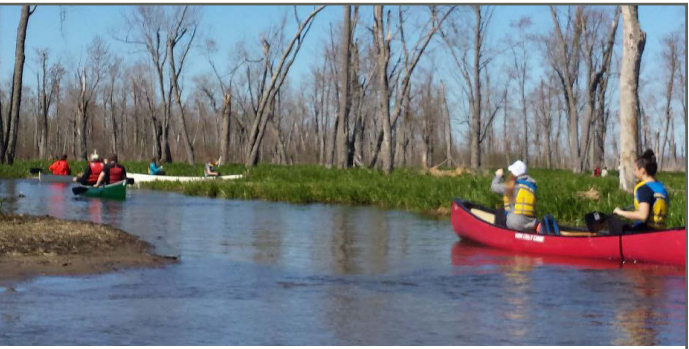
Southern (upstream) breach site (May 2017) - looking west towards main Mad River following installation of northern breach plug in 2016



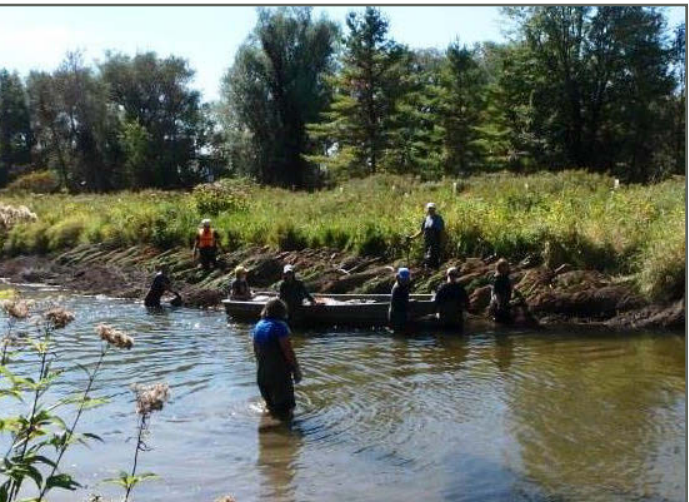
Northern (downstream) breach post construction—looking west towards main Mad River. Note upstream plug which provided construction access



Northern (downstream) breach post construction—looking east towards downstream plug



The Minesing Wetlands is a haven for paddlers, including these students from three local high schools.



Volunteers anchor “Christmas tree” revetments as part of the re-wiggling of Willow Creek.