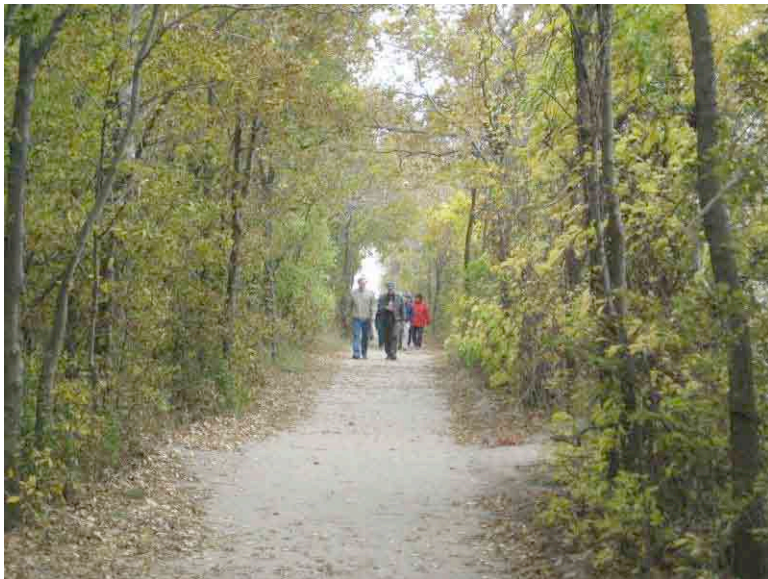




Next Steps Towards a Lake Erie Coastal Stewardship Trail



On the trail to the tip of southernmost mainland Canada at Point Pelee National Park

Following the launch of Carolinian Canada Coalition's new Coastal Zone Program at our "Caring for Our Coast" Forum in October 2009, the next steps in developing a Lake Erie Coastal Stewardship Trail are underway.

In 2010, the CCC Coastal Team will be carrying out background research, holding local workshops from Essex to Niagara and expanding the Coastal Network. Our 3 year goal is to complete a trail plan that reflects input from diverse communities, highlights Lake Erie's natural coastal heritage and points the way to on-the-ground implementation through local partnerships.

healthy communities. Based on forum conversations with the Bruce Trail Conservancy, the Waterfront Regeneration Trust, Hike Ontario and the Ontario Trails Council it's clear that trails are important to Ontarians!

Throughout Ontario, trails strengthen our connection to nature, attract tourism, protect air and water, help rare species and create

The north shore of Lake Erie and the beauty of Carolinian Canada are waiting to be showcased through a Lake Erie Coastal Stewardship Trail. Your participation as a landowner, trail group, municipality, stewardship group, business or volunteer is welcome. Whether you are interested in birding, agro-tourism, habitat restoration or other aspects of the coast - stay connected by joining our Coastal Network.

Caring for Our Coast Forum 2009: Some Preliminary Results

What is the Lake Erie Stewardship Trail Vision?

To develop our concept, we want to know what a Lake Erie Coastal Stewardship Trail means to you. Here are some of your responses:

"A stewardship trail network protects, restores and interprets significant habitat and enhances stewardship for aquatic and terrestrial species at risk."

"A connected nature/culture linear access with many convenient access points with opportunities to learn, enjoy & experience Lake Erie Coastal Features."

"A nature trail that contains rare species, cultural, spiritual, & physical enjoyment. Also should allow people to connect & engage with nature. Creative perspective on the environment."

"A designated route (roadside, roadway trail) that attracts motorists, cyclists and pedestrians from Fort Erie to Windsor within 10km of the shoreline featuring examples of important natural places."



Parks
Canada

Parcs
Canada



THE ONTARIO
TRILLIUM
FOUNDATION



Friends of the
Environment
Foundation



Essex Region
Conservation
Authority



Ontario

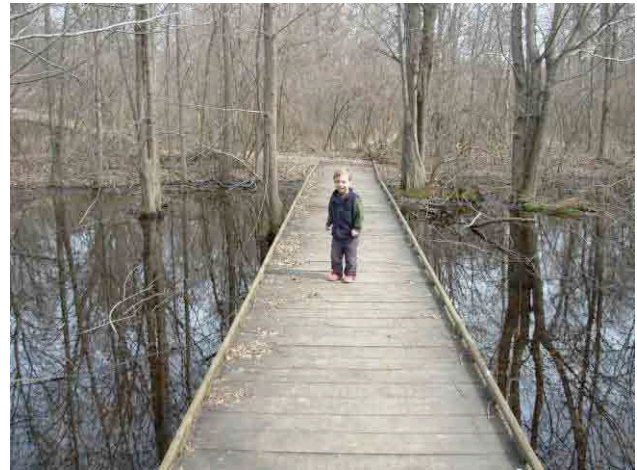
Stay Connected with Carolinian Canada's Coastal Network
www.carolinian.org 519-433-7077 coast@carolinian.org



What are the Best Practices for a Stewardship Trail?

We asked forum participants to tell us what the “Best Practices” for a Stewardship Trail should be. Some of the ideas that were repeated throughout the forum were:

1. Protect and enhance natural and cultural heritage
2. Provide good access for all users and all abilities
3. Make it enjoyable for tourism, with vistas
4. Provide research opportunities
5. Inspire and facilitate stewardship
6. Sustainable funding and governance
7. Meaningful educational component, including about the landscape and the historical land use
8. Community support for the life of the trail
9. Involve, engage and empower youth
10. Demonstrate and engender respect for landowners, flora and fauna, other users



Mapping a Community Stewardship Trail

With so many conservation and trail experts in the room, we wondered what the Lake Erie Coastal Stewardship Trail could encompass. Here were some of the suggestions:

Existing Features: Conservation Farm Award Winners; Heritage Villages; Township Museums; Local Food Networks; Local wineries, Farmers and Corporations who are environmentally sustainable; Provincial parks; National parks; Municipal parks; Conservation Areas; Signature Sites; Accommodations; Campgrounds; Birding sites; Interpretive Centres; Wind farms; Lake Erie Islands; Town Centres; Beaches & Coastal Areas

Potential Linkages: Ravine systems; Trail systems e.g. Trans Canada Trail, Municipal, Volunteer Trail Systems; “Blue” trails (water trails); Abandoned Railways; Historic Routes; Lakeshore roads

Opportunities to Build Partnerships

Workshop participants provided exciting updates about their own projects, many of which can be linked by the Lake Erie Coastal Stewardship Trail. It’s clear that the coastal zone has diverse natural, cultural and historical heritage, currently stewarded by many dedicated groups and individuals, which could be highlighted along a Lake Erie Coastal Stewardship Trail. Visit our virtual workshop and meet some of our diverse Coastal Network members at www.carolinian.org.

How Do I Get Involved?

Local workshops will take place along the Lake Erie Coast over the next 3 years. Notices will be sent to our Coastal Network by email. You can join for free. Tell us about your project that could be linked the trail.

Beyond the Coast

The concept of a Stewardship Trail can be applied to other areas in Carolinian Canada and beyond. We are aiming for an innovative, ecologically-appropriate model, so we’d like to hear of other examples, existing or in development. Let us know about your project.

Carolinian Canada Coalition (CCC). 2009. Author: M. Ihrig. This factsheet is the 2nd in a series about the Carolinian Canada Coastal Zone Program. Obtain copies & other publications from CCC at www.carolinian.org or 519-433-7077.

Stay Connected with Carolinian Canada’s Coastal Network
www.carolinian.org 519-433-7077 coast@carolinian.org

Stretching from Toronto to Windsor, the Carolinian Life Zone of southwestern Ontario is among North America’s most vibrant and fragile ecoregions. Carolinian Canada Coalition (CCC) brings together diverse sectors, people and governments to collaboratively steward southwestern Ontario’s unique habitat network, green infrastructure to support thriving wild and human communities in harmony for generations. EXPLORE CAROLINIAN CANADA at www.carolinian.org 519-433-7077 (Canadian Registered Charity 83559 4722 RR0001)