

## NEWS RELEASE

April 6<sup>th</sup>, Grimsby

### Unique Niagara Natural Gems Recognized

On Friday, April 6<sup>th</sup> Carolinian Canada heritage plaques recognizing Grimsby-Winona Escarpment and Beamer Valley, and the Willoughby Clay Plain, two of 38 Carolinian Canada Signature Sites in the province were unveiled. The ceremony took place at the Beamer Memorial Conservation Area as part of the annual Hawkwatch event. Jim Bradley, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, Tim Hudak, M.P.P. Erie-Lincoln, Bob Bentley, Mayor of Grimsby, Doug Ransom, Chairman, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority and Gordon Nelson, Chairman, Carolinian Canada Coalition all helped to commemorate this event by describing the unique natural features of the two areas and applauding local and regional efforts to preserve them.



“Thanks to generations of landowners and many years of community effort the rich diversity of wildlife and habitats found in these important natural areas has been protected so that we can enjoy them today. These plaques have been erected to recognize those efforts, and to enable future generations to understand the natural values of these sites.” said Gordon Nelson, Chairman of Carolinian Canada Coalition. Grimsby-Winona Escarpment and Beamer Valley and the Willoughby Clay Plain are highlighted in the Carolinian Canada’s Signature Sites Guide available from [www.carolinian.org](http://www.carolinian.org).

The two natural areas are significant contributors to local healthy landscapes. Grimsby-Winona Escarpment and Beamer Valley is one of the most extensive escarpment forests in the Niagara Region. At this site, Forty Mile Creek cascades over two large waterfalls and trails offer spectacular views of the valley. Rare Carolinian birds such as the Tufted Titmouse and Louisiana Waterthrush breed in the forests and tens of thousands of hawks migrate through between March and May.

The Willoughby Clay Plain near Niagara Falls is one of the largest forest and wetland complexes in the eastern Niagara Peninsula with Carolinian trees, such as Swamp White Oak, rare Pin Oak and Pignut Hickory. This natural area also serves as a significant water source for Tee, Usshers, and Black Creeks.

In 1984, Carolinian Canada Coalition identified 38 critical, natural areas in Carolinian Canada that remained unprotected. Building on generations of good stewardship by far-sighted individuals and communities at these sites, considerable effort has been dedicated to their continuing conservation by landowners, community groups and agencies. Each site has a unique story to tell. The Carolinian Canada Heritage Plaque project celebrates these stories and the natural and cultural legacy that we have inherited.

Carolinian Canada Coalition connects groups & people who care for the unique nature and healthy landscapes of southwestern Ontario, a region with more wild and rare species than any other place in Canada. Funding for this project is provided by the Ontario Trillium Foundation, an agency of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Recreation.

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