

# COASTAL WOODLANDS

Coastal woodlands are remnants of what used to be large forests which covered 90% of southwestern Ontario pre-European settlement. Today, three woodland types exist on the southeastern shores of Lake Huron: the Carolinian forest, Great Lakes St. Lawrence Mixed-wood Forest, and the Boreal Forest. Coastal woodlands are diverse in their aesthetic, existing as large, dense, undisturbed forest patches to small treed areas within urban development. Woodlands are home to many species, some of which are endangered and threatened. Of the 60 species of Orchid in Ontario, 43 are found in woodlands on the Bruce Peninsula. Woodlands also provide benefits to residents in the coastal corridor, including shade, wind break, water purification, and nutrient sinks. Healthy woodlands are balanced ecosystems home to diverse flora and fauna. 38% of the southeastern coastal corridor is covered in woodland, with more dense stands existing on the Bruce Peninsula, gradually becoming sparse to the southern reaches of the coast.

## ECOLOGICAL SERVICES PROVIDED BY WOODLANDS:

- 💧 Coastal woodlands are living filters, absorbing sediment, nutrients, and pollutants carried in runoff from adjacent lands.
- 💧 Trees produce Oxygen, and consume Carbon Dioxide.
- 💧 Foliage produced by trees enriches soil around the tree with organic matter, improving soil health.

## STRESSORS AND THREATS AFFECTING ECOSYSTEM HEALTH:

- 💧 Habitat destruction, forest fragmentation, and lack of ecosystem connections.
- 💧 Invasive species (e.g. Garlic Mustard, Emerald Ash Borer).
- 💧 Vehicle use (e.g. ATV's) compacting sensitive soil, and potentially introducing invasive species.
- 💧 Development such as subdivisions and transportation corridors reduce habitat area and can affect which migratory species will continue to use the habitat.
- 💧 Native vegetation removal could reduce habitat for animal lifecycles, especially those relying on forest interior habitat.
- 💧 Plastic pollution and garbage litter cause risks of entanglement and ingestion for animal species.
- 💧 Nutrients and pathogens from nearby septic systems, roadways, and developments can toxify woodlands through bioaccumulation, causing toxified habitat for wildlife.





## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Plant trees to increase forest cover, reduce fringe effects, establish wind breaks, and build corridors between forest patches.
- Habitat clean-ups ensure garbage is removed which can pose an entanglement or ingestion threat to wildlife.
- The amount of forest cover in a watershed should be a minimum of 30%, with a recommended cover of 40-50%. Find out where your watershed stands, and contribute to that forest cover % to keep your landscape resilient!
- Remove any invasive species from coastal woodlands including *Garlic Mustard*, and monitor for new invaders such as *Oak wilt* and *Emerald Ash Borer*.

### FUN FACTS

1 tree drinks 200+ Litres of water each year.

Strategic tree planting around homes saves 25-50% in heating and cooling costs annually.

Trees absorb 48 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> annually.

Tree canopy decreases crime in communities by 10-25%.

### A DIME A DOZEN:

Supporting local tree planting programs that sell trees at less expensive prices or provide free trees to landowners creates more incentive for private landowners to plant trees and restore forest cover.

### GOOD PLANTS ONLY:

Invasive species can completely decimate coastal woodlands. Catching and treating invasive species such as *Garlic Mustard* or *Emerald Ash Borer* early is very important, as removal can be very costly if the invasive is permitted to spread. Planting and restoring woodland areas with native species will rejuvenate woodlands to allow them to provide all their ecosystem services.

### CLOSE TIES:

Connecting habitats with wildlife corridors will ensure movement of plants and animals between woodland patches, keeping genetic diversity strong.

### OTHER RESOURCES:

The Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation

[www.lakehuron.ca](http://www.lakehuron.ca)

Social @coastalcentre

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The Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation

