

Ecological Restoration in Point Pelee National Park's Greater Park Ecosystem

Engaging the Education Community



GPE Remnant Natural Areas



- One of the most highly modified landscapes in Canada
- Less than 7.5% natural habitat
- Over 90% of original wetlands
- ¼ of 1% of Canadian landmass in the Carolinian Life Zone with 25% of the Canadian Population Highest proportion of Species at Risk in Canada



Collaboration in Restoration

- Essex Region Conservation Authority (ERCA) involved in forest restoration for past 20 years
- Essex County Stewardship Network (ECSN), represent farming groups (primary landowners) involved in forest, wetland, and prairie restoration
- Education Community (Public, Catholic, French School Boards)
- 18 collaborating organizations



Funding Partners

- Emerald Ash Borer Response Program – Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources
- Essex Region Conservation Authority – coordinates activities
- Point Pelee National Park – Contribution Agreement (2.5k)





Education and Outreach

- PPNP and ERCA staff initiated project in 2005
- In class presentations and landuse discussion/debates covering:
 - History of Essex Region from last glaciations to present
 - Changes to landscape over last 150 years, and impacts on natural habitats
 - Present landuse activities and potential future impacts given population growth



Education and Outreach Continued

- Objective is to raise awareness of local ecological situation, and generate interest in participation
- Opportunity to give back to their community, earn volunteer hours
- Reached over 600 secondary students in 4 schools





In – Field Component – Seed Collection and Propagation

- Certified Seed Collectors and over 300 students have collected seeds
- 18 species collected, including six Species at Risk
- Stratification and propagation of seed coordinated by ERCA
- Some seeds grown in school greenhouses by students



In – Field Component – Plantings

- Used by ERCA and ECSN in local restoration projects
- PPNP Earthschools Program Staff teaching land stewardship values in local schools
- PPNP and ERCA staff actively involved in forest, grassland, wetland restoration at schools
- Locally collected seeds and plants used by students to restore school yards



Summary

- Meaningful opportunities for students to become land stewards and reconnect with nature
- Involved in learning spectrum (lectures/debates, site planning/design, field work/site restorations)
- Involves partner agencies, school boards, students
- efficient resource use (1PPNP and ERCA staff)
- For the future...schools adopting a seed source, expand school propagation, increased partnership