

NATURE RESERVES

Sauble Dunes Nature Reserve



Sauble Dunes, Ontario Nature's spectacular addition to the nature reserve system, protects an exceptional 51 hectares of forested sand dunes and wetlands. The reserve is located inland from the eastern shore of Lake Huron on the Bruce Peninsula, falling entirely within the Sauble Falls North Life Science Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI) that encompasses 764 hectares between Sauble Falls and Oliphant in Amabel Township. This provincially significant ANSI is one of the best remaining examples of beach ridges, sand plains, sand dunes and swales in the region. The 168 hectares Chief's Point Wetland, a provincially significant coastal wetland complex, extends onto the reserve and is made up of seven individual wetlands comprised of fen, marsh and swamp.

The Great Lakes coastal dune systems are considered to be among the most rare and sensitive ecosystems in Canada. Glacial drift formed the dunes over the last 3,000 to 4,000 years as the post-glacial Lake Nipissing began to recede. The dune forests on the property are particularly unique ecosystems because despite existing on steep, barren sand slopes with only a thin layer of topsoil, they are able to support a





wide variety of spring wildflowers and woodland plants. Drainage between the dunes is typically poor, which has created a remarkable mosaic of wetland depressions or “swales” throughout the property.

Sauble Dunes Nature Reserve’s forested dunes and wetlands offer many different microenvironments, making them extremely diverse ecosystems, high in biodiversity. Sauble Falls North ANSI is home to several provincially rare plant species including long-leaved reed grass, dwarf lake iris and stiff yellow flax. The Chief’s Point Wetland also hosts the provincially rare beaked spikerush, Indian plantain and crested arrowhead. These areas also provide habitat for the provincially threatened Massasauga rattlesnake, and provincially significant ribbonsnake.

Other wonderful species that can be discovered on the reserve include the red-shouldered hawk and Cooper’s hawk, several species of frog and salamander, many mammals including coyote and red fox, and numerous songbirds such as the yellow-rumped warbler, purple finch, swamp sparrow, and northern waterthrush. The reserve also provides locally significant feeding and migrating habitat for various water and shore birds.

Sauble Dunes Nature Reserve was donated to Ontario Nature in memory of James and Eva Hetherington, and Ernest and Catharine Lewington. Thanks to the generosity of everyone who supported our fundraising campaign, we were able to set up an endowment fund to ensure that this natural treasure will be protected forever.

How to get there

While the unique habitats found on this reserve offer extraordinary opportunities for nature viewing, the dune ecosystems are extremely vulnerable to erosion from trampling. As there is currently no trail system in place, we would appreciate it if Ontario Nature members and supporters allow us to make a management plan and create a trail that avoids sensitive plants, animals and ecosystems before visiting this property. For more information please contact Ontario Nature at info@ontarionature.org.