

Landscaping Photos



Planting and seeding



Roadside slope work



Cahill Siphon inlet



Pond 6

## The Latest on Landscaping

Significant progress is being made to implement the Landscape Plan for the Rt. Hon. Herb Gray Parkway (the Parkway). While landscape implementation will continue into 2015, the team is proud of all that has been accomplished so far this year and have received positive feedback from the community. Here are some of the highlights.

**Approximately 23,000 trees, plants and shrubs have been planted in the corridor.** Upon completion, there will be approximately 100,000 plants installed, making the Parkway project the largest landscape undertaking for any provincial highway project to date and the first to require locally sourced native plant material. Native Carolinian trees, shrubs, grasses and wildflowers that are characteristic of the Windsor-Essex Region are being used throughout the Parkway. Plants and shrubs are monitored once they are planted and we ensure steps are taken to assist with their long-term survival through proper maintenance. Plants that do not flourish will be replaced through the warranty process.

**Approximately 38 hectares of the landscaped portions of the Parkway have been seeded.** Fifteen different seed mixes which contain an estimated 60 native wildflowers and grasses are being used.

**More than half of all the roadside slope work is complete.** The roadside landscapes are experienced by people travelling through the Parkway and reflect highway design and Ministry of Transportation specifications. Hardy plant material has been selected that will tolerate the harsher roadside environment. The roadside landscape type is grassland with a complement of trees and shrubs where grades permit.

**Berms throughout the corridor are in various stages of completion.** Excess soil from Parkway construction has been used sustainably to create berms for noise attenuation, to screen adjacent areas and also to provide visual interest.

**Fish habitat compensation features and drains throughout the corridor are in various stages of completion.** A detailed landscaping plan supporting the creation or enhancement of fish habitat is now being implemented. These areas will include extensive planting of both terrestrial and aquatic plants.

**A complex stormwater drainage system for the Parkway including five pump stations and seven large ponds is taking shape.** Plantings in the stormwater management landscapes include deciduous trees and shrubs, native groundcover, aquatic plant plugs and seed mixes containing grasses and forbs. Adjacent ecological landscape types such as Tallgrass Prairie, Tallgrass Meadow-marsh, and Woodland have also influenced the planting treatment of each of the stormwater pond landscapes.



Using your smartphone, scan this QR code to see the Final Landscape and Trail Master Plan Map for the Parkway.

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## Construction Update

The Parkway construction crews are out in full-force working throughout the corridor. Be advised that some crews are on the construction site during night-time hours preparing sites and making sure work can continue the next day. Lighting is in place for safety during work at night.

As reported in the last edition of this newsletter, re-opening municipal cross-roads is a priority for the project team. In September, Lambton Road, travelling across the top of the Grand Marais Tunnel (T-3), opened to traffic. As well, the E.C. Row Expressway on-ramp at Matchette Road is anticipated to reopen this year. This ramp has been closed for about two years to allow for various construction activities including the installation of wick drains, embankment construction, and construction of a new ramp, bridge and connection to new eastbound collector lanes.

Ongoing/upcoming roadway works include:

- re-construction of Bethlehem Avenue over the Labelle Tunnel (T-2)
- re-construction of Cabana Road
- opening of Highway 3 from Cabana Road to Pulford Street and from Grand Marais Road to Labelle Street
- construction of Highway 401.

Works continue on bridges, tunnels and pump stations throughout the corridor.

## Sharing Knowledge – Building Hibernacula

In accordance with permits granted under the *Endangered Species Act, 2007*, the Ontario Ministry of Transportation is enhancing the habitat of at-risk snakes, including the Eastern Foxsnake, through the creation of hibernacula. Hibernacula are underground chambers that snakes use as refuge through the fall and winter months.

Before constructing a hibernaculum last August, staff at Point Pelee National Park connected with the Parkway team to learn about the hibernacula design developed by the Parkway environmental team. Elizabeth LeBlanc at Parks Canada discusses their experiences creating a hibernaculum.

### **Herb Gray Parkway (HGP): How did you hear about the Parkway hibernacula?**

Elizabeth LeBlanc (EL): Staff at Point Pelee National Park were researching whether any organizations had previously converted a residential basement into a snake hibernaculum. During our research, we learned about the work being done on the Parkway which exactly matched what we were looking to do in the park.

### **HGP: Why did you build a hibernaculum?**

EL: In support of the National Conservation Plan, one of Parks Canada's conservation and restoration goals is to promote the recovery of species at risk. Extensive research conducted by Queen's University on Eastern Foxsnakes in the park over several years (ending in 2008) showed that a lack of winter hibernation habitat for snakes may be a possible contributor to the decline of the Eastern Foxsnake populations in the park. Three buildings within the park were slated for demolition which provided the perfect opportunity to explore the possibility of converting the basement in the larger building into a hibernaculum.

### **HGP: How was the Parkway team able to help?**

EL: The Parkway team was very helpful as they met with us and provided Parks Canada with the [technical specifications for their hibernacula design, developed specifically to take advantage of building foundations in areas of known snake habitat]. These specifications allowed us to tailor the Parkway construction design to our own hibernaculum.

### **HGP: Was it a complicated process?**

EL: It took four days to build the hibernaculum. The first step was removing two of the smaller buildings on the site, which provided concrete rubble for insertion into the basement of the main building. Then, the main building was deconstructed and the basement exposed. Holes and cracks were created in the basement floor for water drainage. Perforated PVC drainage pipes were inserted on an angle with the tops reaching the outside ledges, serving as entryways for the snakes. The rubble was strategically placed in the basement to leave spaces for the snakes to migrate within. A sheet of geotextile was placed atop the entire hibernaculum and a layer of sand covered the surface. It took an additional day to surround the entrance pipes with concrete slabs, bricks and logs creating basking and hiding habitat for the snakes.

### **HGP: Have you seen positive results of the hibernaculum yet?**

EL: We won't be able to confirm whether Eastern Foxsnakes (or other snake species) are using the hibernaculum until spring, but we have had visual confirmation of snakes entering the structure.



*Steps in building the hibernaculum -*

*Basement cleaning, putting in the concrete blocks by hand and placing the textile fabric and sand on top.*

# People Profile

## Meet Some of the Team

The Rt. Hon. Herb Gray Parkway is creating and supporting jobs across the region and helping to stimulate our local economy. Design and construction of the Parkway is also providing training for people in our community and creating unique partnerships.

### Q. What is your name and position?

A. My name is Michael McIntyre and my position is Landscape Superintendent, although this project is quite unique and more complicated than any "landscape" project I've ever been a part of.



### Q. Where are you from?

A. I have lived in Windsor for almost fourteen years but I grew up in Kingsville, Ontario.

### Q. What type of work are you doing on the Parkway project?

A. Along with an extensive team of experts and local professional landscapers ranging from botanists, ecologists, and landscape architects we are attempting prairie restoration on a scale never before seen in a wide variety of different environments using native plants and grasses. This means almost everything you see in the landscape, upon project completion, will have been sourced from a local or nearby source. Right now we are making a big push to install as much plant material as possible before winter makes conditions unfavourable.

### Q. How long will you be working on the project?

A. I hope to be on the project, at the very least, until the landscape and ecological restoration zones throughout the Parkway are completed. This could prove challenging as some prairie seed could take years before they even decide to germinate which, is one reason why I hope the public and others involved with the project take the time to educate themselves on what to expect from the landscape as time goes on through all the resources available such as literature, workshops and signage which will eventually be posted throughout the extensive trail systems.

### Q. When people find out that you are working on the Parkway project what do they typically say?

A. People are excited to hear about all the great things being done to increase diversity and green space and usually have questions related to the areas you can see from existing roadways like the West Gateway berms adjacent to the Ojibway Parkway. There are also a lot of questions related to the tunnel tops which have not yet been started from a landscaping perspective. We are quite anxious to get started on as soon as construction allows.

### Q. What has been the most rewarding part of your work on the project so far?

A. The most rewarding part has been working with the great people and businesses trying their hardest to make this huge landscape project come together. We are constantly learning from each other and the many challenges which present themselves out here on a day-to-day basis.

### Q. Do you have anything else you would like our readers to know about your experience working on this project?

A. I would definitely encourage people to get out and visit places like the Ojibway Prairie Complex to learn more about the place they are from and what the project is eventually trying to recreate in its many ecological restoration zones. I will definitely be taking much more knowledge and experience from this project than I would have ever imagined and can't wait to see it through to the finish.

## That's a lot of Lights

9,165 High Pressure Sodium (HPS) and 859 Light Emitting Diode (LED) lights are being installed in the 11 Parkway tunnels providing lighting 24 hours a day. The lighting on the Parkway is unique because it combines these two different types of lights that are efficient, compact, reliable, energy efficient and long lasting.

During the day the 10,024 HPS and LED lights are in operation. There are three different levels of daytime lighting. The light outside the tunnel defines which level is used through a light controller regulated by a photocell camera housed in each tunnel. At night only the LED lights are on. The LED serve as emergency lighting too and there is a back-up system that will keep the LED working.

Each tunnel has a different layout for lighting based on the location of the tunnel (facing north or south) and the length of the tunnel. Each light has a specific position in each tunnel. There are more lights at the entrance of each tunnel and less at the exit to make sure the transition into and out of the tunnel is seamless and provides the greatest safety for the driver.

Lights are installed manually into their locations between the girders by the approximately 180 trained electricians currently on site.



## Safe Winter Driving

All predictions say it is going to be another snowy winter season in Windsor and Essex County. We want you and all the Parkway workers to remain safe so please remember to always watch for signage and flag persons when travelling in the construction corridor.

Winter weather conditions will be monitored with an appropriate response via snow plows, spreaders, and combination trucks. Winter maintenance equipment will travel more slowly than regular traffic. You can help by staying alert through the Parkway zone especially when you see snow removal equipment. Remember to be patient, slow down and keep a safe distance back from winter maintenance equipment. It is extremely dangerous to pass between or around plows.

If you have any questions or concerns about winter maintenance on the Parkway, please contact the WEMG Public Liaison Office at 1-877-937-5929.

## Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority

Since the announcement of the members of the Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority (WDBA) in August 2014, the Parkway team has received many questions about the status of the Detroit River International Crossing and about the WDBA.

The best place to direct your DRIC bridge and WDBA questions is [info@wdbridge.com](mailto:info@wdbridge.com). Members of the WDBA team monitor that email address and will do their best to answer your questions.

If you have any questions about the Parkway please contact us through any of the methods detailed to the right.

## KID ZONE

### Create a Tool Belt

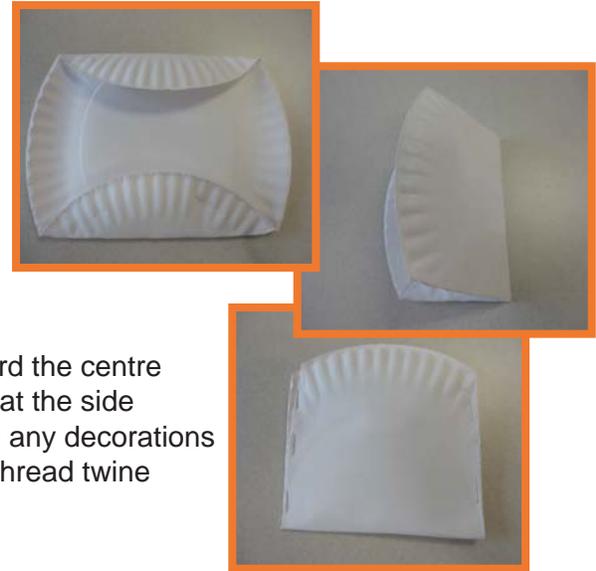
Each day, 1,200 labourers, technicians, designers and other staff work on the Parkway. Many of the workers on-site, like carpenters, wear tool belts. You can make your very own tool belt by following these instructions.

#### What you need:

Large paper plate  
Stapler  
Paint, crayons or coloured pencils  
Hole punch  
Twine or yarn

#### Steps:

1. Fold the sides of the plate in toward the centre
2. Fold the plate in half and staple it at the side
3. Paint or colour the pouch and add any decorations
4. Punch two holes in the back and thread twine through holes



You can create your own tools too. Visit [www.pinterest.com/hgparkway](http://www.pinterest.com/hgparkway), print the tools template on the Kid Zone board, colour and cut out the tools and carry them in your new tool belt.



### Aerial Photos



Our aerial photographer was out taking photos again in September. Lots of progress has been made since the last set of photos taken in June. View the photos on our Flickr site and scroll through previous aerial photo galleries to see how the area has changed in the last three years.

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[www.linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com)

There are many ways to stay up-to-date

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