

# LIVING WITH NATURAL AREAS

## Sparling Bush



UPPER THAMES RIVER  
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Sparling Bush provides residents and visitors access to a variety of plant and animal life, and recreational trails. The continued preservation of Sparling Bush is crucial as it provides immense ecological and recreational value, and is, therefore, an integral Town asset.

In late 2014, the Town of St. Marys requested that the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) complete an inspection and prepare a report regarding the condition of the bush along with recommendations to improve its health and overall management.

UTRCA identified several key issues that threaten the conservation of Sparling Bush and provided recommendations to reduce these threats. A copy of the report, titled “Sparling Bush: Management Recommendations for the Town of St. Marys” can be found through the Town’s website ([www.townofstmarys.com](http://www.townofstmarys.com)).

As the primary users and neighbours of this natural amenity, we need your assistance to help reduce the risk factors that are currently affecting the overall health of Sparling Bush. This newsletter will identify the small steps that can be taken by the community and the Town to help conserve Sparling Bush to ensure its long term recreational use and preservation of its ecology.



See reverse for helpful tips on how to help preserve the health of Sparling Bush!



### You're invited...

As someone who lives near Sparling Bush, you are invited to attend an upcoming Open House to discuss the continued preservation and usage of Sparling Bush.

This is an opportunity for you to speak with staff from the Town of St. Marys and the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, share your concerns and ask questions about the future of Sparling Bush.

### Sparling Bush Open House

Thursday October 26, 2017, 6:00 - 8:00 pm  
Municipal Operations Centre, 408 James St. South

### Additional Information

Morgan Dykstra, Public Works Coordinator  
519-284-2340, ext. 213  
[mdykstra@town.stmarys.on.ca](mailto:mdykstra@town.stmarys.on.ca)

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The Town of St. Marys and the UTRCA are committed to the preservation of Sparling Bush. However, there are a number of key issues that threaten the conservation of this natural amenity. We need your assistance to reduce the risk factors that are currently affecting the health of Sparling Bush.

### How do we preserve Sparling Bush?

As one of the very fortunate members of the community who lives near Sparling Bush, you have a special role to play. By helping to maintain Sparling Bush's healthy, natural condition, you can preserve the spectacular views and sustain the value of your home.

#### DO



##### **Be mindful of native and non-native plants.**

Placement of invasive alien species in gardens located near Sparling Bush can easily outcompete native species and lead to a decline in native biodiversity and reduced ecosystems.



**Use official entry points.** The creation of personal access points into Sparling Bush damages both the density of the bush and the interior through soil compaction. Using Town established entry points protects off trail vegetation.



**Carry in/carry out your trash.** Do not leave anything in Sparling Bush. Help out by picking up any litter that you find and dispose of it properly.



**Enjoy!** Sparling Bush is a shared space and should be enjoyed. Take photographs and use the trail regularly.

#### DON'T



**Create encroachments.** Mowing, gardening, or installing structures such as sheds or fences within the Sparling Bush boundaries is illegal. Encroaching into the edges of Sparling Bush reduces the size and threatens the integrity and value of the bush.



**Dump yard waste.** Dumping yard waste may inadvertently transport alien plants or animals into Sparling Bush, which can wreak havoc on the native ecosystem, while also preventing natural regeneration. Please use the Town's bi-weekly curbside pick up to dispose of yard waste materials.



**Have open fires or smoke.** Open fire within the confines of Sparling Bush is dangerous as the potential to spread is very high.

The Town of St. Marys also has a role in protecting the integrity of Sparling Bush, including:

1. Removal of non-native species, as time allows
2. Continued development of existing trail paths, which involves wood chip placement to improve the surface
3. Annual inspection of trees adjacent to internal trails
4. Improved local signage at trail entrance points to Sparling Bush, including an official trail map of the bush interior

