

# 3 Open Country Habitats

## A Natural Features and Areas



Source: Yelantevv, Shutterstock

Ontario is home to many different types of open country habitats, including tallgrass prairies, shrublands and savannas. Open country habitats are one of the fastest declining habitat types in southern Ontario. As availability of these habitats decreases, the risk to species that rely on these habitats increases. Several Species at Risk and species of conservation concern use these habitats, and their presence on the landscape will depend on the presence of these habitats. More broadly, open country habitats provide habitat for a broad range of insects (including pollinators), birds, herpetofauna (amphibians, reptiles) and mammals.

There is a unique opportunity to enhance or introduce these habitats within the Trent lands to combat issues of habitat fragmentation and to provide continuous, suitable habitat and connections for wildlife movement. Areas of opportunity to integrate meadow landscapes include the hydro corridor, rooftops of buildings, and as features that are integrated into green spaces.

Open country habitats should be designed and implemented in a manner that respects the existing natural features of the Trent lands. An assessment to delineate appropriate locations for implementation of a meadowway will be required. Meadowway treatments provide informational signage that elaborates on their importance in sustaining biodiversity and protecting Species at Risk. They can also contribute to the outdoor teaching, research, and learning spaces accessible to Trent University students and faculty. With a regular maintenance regime required to prevent or slow the natural succession process, students have an opportunity to be actively involved in reinstatement initiatives and participate in their ongoing stewardship (every 3-5 years).



Scarborough Butterfly Trail, Toronto.  
Source: Catherine Mackenzie, Twitter



Pollinator Habitat in the Meadoway, Toronto.  
Source: Canadian Wildlife Federation



Grassland Stewardship at Malcomson Eco Park  
Source: Claire Theijsmeijer, Friends of Malcomson Eco Park