

TOUR OF TURKEY CREEK WATERSHED

1 Malden Road bridge - View of riparian zone along banks of river. Natural vegetation prevents erosion and provides shade, cooling the water and providing fish and wildlife habitat.

2 The Spring Garden Complex, at approximately 165 hectares, is one of the largest natural areas in the City of Windsor. It has 509 recorded plant species, 36 of which are considered rare in Ontario. This area supports a great range of biological communities including: tallgrass prairie, oak savannah, mature upland hardwood, and wetlands. As a result, there is a wide variety of fauna within the area, including 30 species of rare mammals, birds, reptiles and butterflies (*Spring Garden Complex Environmental Evaluation Report 1996*). In addition to being considered part of the Ojibway Prairie Remnants Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI) by the Ministry of Natural Resources, Spring Garden carries the designation of Environmentally Significant Area (ESA) by the Essex Region Conservation Authority.

3 Start of LaSalle Trail bike path and recreational trails.

4 View of Ojibway Prairie Provincial Nature Reserve - The goal of the Ojibway Prairie Provincial Nature Reserve is to “ensure the protection and perpetuation of a unique example of tallgrass prairie and prairie/savannah environment in Ontario... for educational purposes and as gene pools for research in order to benefit present and future generations”. This provincial park supports a plant community like no other in the province. More rare plants per hectare are found here than at any other park in Ontario. Every week from May to October, new native species come into bloom. Three metre tall wildflowers, big bluestem and Indian grass line sections of the path in August and September.

5 Marcotte Park - Channelization of creek led to development on opposite bank and loss of former wetlands. The Friends of Turkey Creek have assisted in planting many native species of trees here to help restore the riparian zone and create a naturalized corridor.

6 Matchette bridge - View of provincially significant wetlands toward mouth of river. Site of Native Plant Demonstration Garden.

7 Ojibway Oaks Park - Significant species documented here include pin oak and pignut hickory trees, as well as riverbank wildrye, willowherb, and Southern arrowwood, all plants considered rare in Essex region. The wooden bridge provides a view of home owners plantings of non-native species on banks of creek.

8 Ramblewood & Morton - The Ontario Pesticides Act allows golf courses to use pesticides and fertilizers. These and other chemicals can enter Turkey Creek from adjacent lands.

9 Site of proposed big-box store development - Impermeable surfaces such as roads and parking lots collect pollutants that disperse into watersheds. These pollutants affect water quality and flora and fauna.

10 River St. View of provincially significant wetlands. Wetlands area is approximately 22 hectares. Provincial guidelines are meant to prevent or restrict development in provincially significant wetlands or buffer zones.

11 The bridge that looks like a boat! Site of annual Turkey Creek Cleanup and Canoe Race.

12 Woodlot is designated a natural heritage site - The trees here include black oak, pignut hickory, sassafras, largetooth aspen, black cherry and trembling aspen. The woodlot also includes shrub thicket and prairie communities. Among the plants found here are colic-root, which is

classified as threatened, and dense blazing star, a vulnerable species. It is also home to the threatened Eastern fox snake.

13 Malden Road Bridge over Cahill Drain - Large amounts of garbage have been cleaned out of this tributary by the Friends of Turkey Creek. Further upstream, it has been connected to the West Branch Cahill Drain, which flows to the Canard River.

14 Brunet Park - Part of the LaSalle Woodlot Environmentally Significant Area. This area was known as the Sandwich West woodlot in the early 90's when citizen groups came together to successfully protect most of it from development. Several tributaries of Turkey Creek meet here and parts of the area remain very wet in the spring. These “ephemeral wetlands” are very important for breeding amphibians and other wildlife.

