



POLITICIANS ALONG THE ESCARPMENT

This issue, with municipal elections behind us, we take a look at the Niagara Escarpment and its political boundaries. Did you know that the entire Niagara Escarpment geological feature is actually international? The southeastern end begins along the south shore of Lake Ontario in the United States, and the Escarpment enters Canada at Queenston near Niagara Falls. The northern end passes through Tobermory and along

Manitoulin Island, where it re-enters the United States and curves south along the western side of Lake Michigan.

In Canada, there are **16 federal and provincial political ridings** that encompass or are in close proximity to the Niagara Escarpment geological area. Most of these ridings, whether federal or provincial, have the same boundaries. Of the 107 total members in the Ontario Legislative Assembly, 15 per cent represent an area of the Niagara Escarpment. The same is true for the Canadian Parliament, with 15 per cent of the Ontario members, or five per cent of the entire House, representing the Escarpment.

This adds up to a lot of people! Including the Ontario Minister of Natural Resources, who oversees the Niagara Escarpment Commission, there are 33 elected federal and provincial politicians on or near the Niagara Escarpment. All of the provincial parties, including the leaders of two parties, and half the federal parties, have members in these ridings. **This is a significant representation.** At the same time, it can be fragmented and not unified enough. While politicians must care about their local constituencies, “keeping it local” as the saying goes, this can distract them from considering the Niagara Escarpment as a whole.

The Escarpment is a contiguous, international entity that should be looked at as a significant geological and natural resource that could serve as an example to the world, of far-sighted resource management and entrepreneurial ventures that provide sustainable jobs without destroying the very feature that makes these opportunities possible. We urge our federal and provincial officials to think outside of the “election boundary” box and **emphasize their care for the Niagara Escarpment as a whole.**

For the convenience of our readers, on page 25 we’ve listed the contact details and party affiliations for our federal and provincial representatives. We also acknowledge the large number of elected officials at the municipal level, as well as appointed citizens who work hard for the good of the Niagara Escarpment although there are far too many to list.

When considered all together, there should be no doubt that many, many people have the responsibility for protecting, preserving and making the best use possible, of the marvellous, international and world-recognized wonder that is the Niagara Escarpment.

Also in this issue, we look to the northern, central and southern parts of the Escarpment area. We learn about studies done on black bears of the Bruce Peninsula, we peek at 19th-century Christmas traditions of Upper Canada, and we note the passing of an important dollhouse collection that used to exist in Fort Erie. Time passes, and what once was, may never be the same again. This needs to be kept in mind about the Escarpment itself. **What took eons to form can be chipped away in a few decades, but never restored. Once gone, it’s forever.**

Mike

Mike Davis, Co-publisher