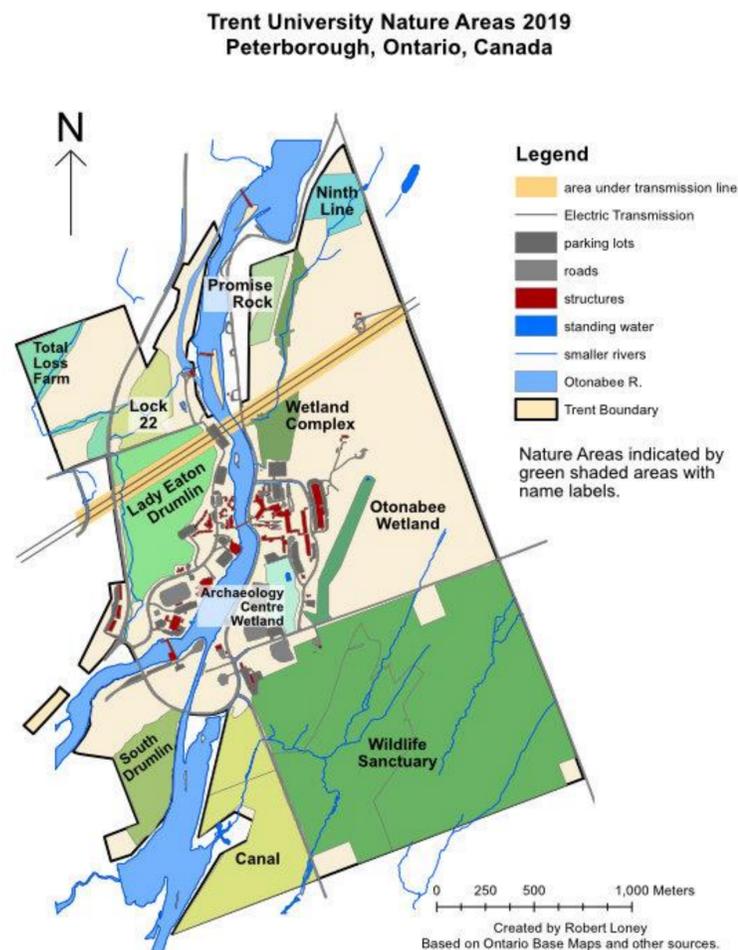


Evaluation of Trent University's Invasive Species Management Practices

Background

This project was conducted in partnership with the Nature Areas Stewardship Advisory Committee (NASAC), which provides advice on the management of Trent Nature Areas (TNA). There are a variety of options in invasive species management depending on priorities, perspectives and resources. There are concerns about species that are considered "invasive" because they can dominate ecosystems and reduce biodiversity.

Figure 1: Map of the Trent Nature Areas



Purpose

- ❖ The purpose of this study is to assess the management practices that have been attempted in the past and summarize current practices.
- ❖ It also aims to determine the knowledge, perception and attitude towards invasive species held by individuals and groups at Trent that play a role in the management of invasive species.
- ❖ By determining the past, present, and current goals for invasive species management at Trent, recommendations can be made to improve management and potentially include student engagement.

Methods

A focus group was organized with a variety of stakeholders including past and current members of NASAC, facilities management and the Land Stewardship Coordinator, an invasive species specialist, faculty, and the director of campus planning and development. During the focus group, participants discussed in groups of two-three, then with the whole group. They discussed the following questions:

1. What are some invasive species found in the Trent Nature Areas are you most concerned about?
2. Of the species that you are concerned about, what are some ecological impacts or threats they pose are you aware of?
3. Taking into consideration resources available and the ecological impacts of invasive species in the Nature Areas, what management practices would you like to see?
4. How has your perception of invasive species management changed over time?

Preliminary Findings

Previous Management Practices :

Other than assessments and studies completed by students, there have been limited actions taken to remove invasive species.

Current Management Practices :

The Land Stewardship Coordinator oversees invasive species management in the TNA. Analyses of dominant species in the upper canopy, subcanopy, understory and groundcover have been completed. Phragmites and certain patches of dog strangling vines are a priority. Buckthorn is a lesser priority but is still being considered. Management practices will include physical removal and may include selective use of herbicides.

Focus group :

- ❖ European buckthorn and dog strangling vine are of high concern.
- ❖ A wholistic management approach is required (ecological, social, management).
- ❖ Management should be based on priorities.
- ❖ Perceptions have changed over time to a more "realistic" understanding.

Future Studies

There is a potential for future studies to be conducted at Trent looking at invasive species management and monitoring. Doing a comparison with this study would help inform future invasive species management. Future studies would also help track the progress of invasive species management.