



## Sandbanks Ecologist Recognized

*John A. Brebner, March 2017*

The Friends of Sandbanks and the staff of Sandbanks Provincial Park wish to congratulate Yvette Bree, long-time Natural Heritage Educator (NHE) on her well-deserved receipt of the Ontario Parks Ecological Integrity Award, awarded February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at Ontario Parks headquarters in Peterborough.

This award is presented to an individual who preserves or restores physical elements or biodiversity within their park and inspires ecological integrity in others.

Supported by park staff and management, Yvette has helped instill the concept that Sandbanks Park is much more than “just a beach”.



*17-3521: Left to right: **Richard Raper** (retired MNRF Forester, Ontario Parks Board Member), **Brad Steinberg** (Provincial Learning Program and NHE Coordinator), **Yvette Bree**, **Bruce Bateman** (Director, Ontario Parks).*

*Photo: Evan Holt, Ontario Parks*



*15-9799: Yvette guides visitors at the site of the historic Lakeshore Lodge on West Point*

*Photo: John A. Brebner, Friends of Sandbanks Park*

For 30 years Yvette has taught her NHE team and visitors, through lectures, theatre and trail walks, the importance of resource management. Anyone who has taken a nature walk with Yvette has always come away with a better understanding of the unique ecology of this Park, and discovered something new about this unique area.

Sandbanks is a hugely challenging dune ecosystem with a high recreational use over a geographically diverse park area. Much of that land between the original Sandbanks Beach and the Outlet Beach had been cultivated continuously by pioneer settlers from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century until just recently.

Yvette is known throughout the park system as being deeply concerned about invasive plants, reinventing farmland through reforestation and educating visitors to ecological challenges within Sandbanks and the Ontario Park system.

Many thousands of additional trees will be planted in Sandbanks Park this year, adding to an already staggering total of 100,000 trees so far!



*15-9566: Summer visitors enjoy the very popular Sandbank Beach at the Park.  
Photo: John A. Brebner, Friends of Sandbanks Park*

The opening of the newest campground near West Lake this summer will encourage even more visitors to vacation at the Park. And with over half-a-million visitors during the season, preserving ecologically sensitive areas within the Sandbanks Park is a challenge both to Yvette and Park management!

But the area's unique geological character, which contributes to its popularity, its many visitors "loving the Park", as well as long-term climate change, are proving deleterious to some of its native species.

Visitors need to be encouraged to stay on the trails and to respect native vegetation, especially in the more fragile dune areas of the Park. Observing fencing and Marram grass plantings, designed to reduce erosion, and restraining the shifting sands is essential to preserving this wonderful park for both residents' and visitors' children and grandchildren for the next century.

A jewel in the Ontario Park's system, Sandbanks Provincial Park is actively involved in the ongoing mitigation of invasive species to prevent any further degradation of endangered flora and fauna.

With an expert team at the Park, Yvette's years of knowledge and experience ensures that the preservation of our park for future generations is in good hands.

Congratulations, Yvette!



*Above: 13-7010: Park visitors on a guided walk*

*Below, 16-7511: Marram grass holds drifting sand in place on the foredunes*

