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## **MEDIA RELEASE – *for immediate release***

### **Results are in for most Amazing Places in Norfolk**

*Ontario Biospheres celebrate Canada Day with 30 Amazing Places in Ontario*

NORFOLK COUNTY, July 1, 2014 – Three Ontario Biospheres are celebrating Canada Day by announcing 30 special places in Ontario as part of their Amazing Places project – an initiative that highlights areas of natural, cultural and historical significance so that visitors may learn about and appreciate our area.

Long Point, Frontenac Arch and Georgian Bay biospheres have been working together to select 10 Amazing Places in each of their biosphere communities.

The Top Ten Amazing Places in Norfolk County for summer 2014 are as follows (in alphabetical order):

1. Backus Heritage Conservation Area
2. Black Bridge – Waterford Heritage Trail
3. Bonnieheath Estate Lavender & Winery
4. Deer Creek Conservation Area
5. Long Point Provincial Park Beach
6. Long Point Bird Observatory
7. Long Point Eco Adventures
8. Lynn Valley Trail
9. Sand Hill Park
10. Whistling Gardens

During the month of May, locals nominated their favourite places throughout Norfolk County using a social mapping tool on a new website created by the Ontario biosphere reserves ([www.VisitAmazingPlaces.ca](http://www.VisitAmazingPlaces.ca)). Residents added photos and short descriptions about why they thought each location was amazing.

“We were thrilled to receive a total of 54 nominations,” says Andrea Kilian, Sustainable Tourism Project Manager for the Long Point Biosphere. “Each location had an interesting story to tell about its natural, cultural or historical features. It was extremely difficult narrow it down to only 10.”

A selection committee made up of community members met to review the nominations and selected the “Top Ten” using an extensive checklist including 18 criteria and considerations.

Each location will have its own webpage, with photos, an interpretive description explaining why the site is so amazing as well as GPS and access information posted on the [VisitAmazingPlaces.ca](http://VisitAmazingPlaces.ca) website.

The Long Point Biosphere will release interpretive data about a new 'Amazing Place' each week throughout the summer, starting with Sand Hill Park:

What makes Sand Hill Park Amazing?

“Obviously the view from the top of the sand hill at Sand Hill Park is amazing,” says Kilian. “But there are other interesting facts about this location that are fascinating. For example, did you know that the sand at the crest of the dune is approximately 90 % quartz but also contains trace amounts of iron pyrite, or fool’s gold? It is also a great location to spot bank swallows burrowing into the sandy cliffs along the shoreline to nest.”

To learn more visit: [www.VisitAmazingPlaces.ca/SandHillPark](http://www.VisitAmazingPlaces.ca/SandHillPark)

“If you are travelling across Ontario this summer, you may want to explore the 'Amazing Places' at two other UNESCO biosphere reserves: Frontenac Arch and Georgian Bay,” says Kilian. “The Amazing Places project was a sustainable tourism concept that originated in New Brunswick at the Fundy Biosphere Reserve. It has been our experience that people protect what they know and love and we're trying to build these connections through the Amazing Places project.”

Last month the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport announced \$52,400 in project funding to support sustainable tourism advancement in three Ontario biosphere reserve communities: Long Point, Georgian Bay and Frontenac Arch. Amazing Places is one of the projects that was completed with this funding.

**To view 10 Amazing Places in Norfolk:** [www.VisitAmazingPlaces.ca/long-point](http://www.VisitAmazingPlaces.ca/long-point)

Amazing Places Scheduled Release Dates:

*Check the website on these release dates to learn all about why you should visit these Amazing Places.*

July 1 – **Sand Hill Park:** Climb to the top of the sand dune at Sand Hill Park for the best view of Lake Erie in Norfolk. The breathtaking turquoise water is so unbelievable it matches the beauty of any Caribbean postcard.

July 4 - **Bonnieheath Estate Lavender and Winery:** an ecological agri-tourism destination that provides a small farm experience through culture and education from field to final product.

July 11 - **Long Point Eco-Adventures:** an ecological enterprise consisting of canopy tours, stargazing, kayaking, kayak fishing and more!

July 18 – **Deer Creek Conservation Area:** Experience the tranquility of northern Ontario, without taking the drive, at Deer Creek Conservation Area. This scenic conservation area, which is owned and operated by the Long Point Region Conservation Authority, has often been called the best-kept secret in Norfolk County.

July 25 - **Whistling Gardens,** a former cornfield, is home to the largest public collection of conifers in the world with over 2,500 species. The property is “hand sculpted” into 6 major gardens all seamlessly connected with nearly 4 km of accessible walking paths.

Aug. 1 – **Backus Heritage Conservation Area:** Nestled in the heart of Carolinian Canada, Backus Heritage Conservation Area is a special place where you can spend the day enjoying nature and history.

Aug. 8 - **The Lynn Valley Trail** is a 10 km former rail line that was converted into a pedestrian trail. Starting in Port Dover and ending in Simcoe, you can hike or cycle the trail to enjoy stunning scenery, bridges and waterfalls.

Aug. 15 - **Long Point Bird Observatory:** a non-profit, research and monitoring station that is committed to the conservation of wild birds and their habitats. The programs at Long Point are focused on local breeding and migratory birds. Visitors can watch as volunteers from across Canada and around the world come to count and band migratory birds.

Aug. 22 – **Black Bridge – Waterford Heritage Trail:** Breathtaking views from a 166 metre long bridge overlooking the Waterford Ponds to the west and the picturesque town of Waterford to the east.

Aug. 29 – **Long Point Provincial Park Beach:** Long Point Provincial Park and its 1.5 km sandy beach along the shores and warm waters of Lake Erie is one of the most special places Ontario has to offer and is located within a designated World Biosphere Reserve.