



**Brant Resource
Stewardship Network**

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STEWARDSHIP NETWORK
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Healthy plant and wildlife populations require healthy habitats. The goal of the wildlife habitat management objective is to encourage the protection of tallgrass habitats through sound management.

The Blue Lake White Oak Savanna is one of the best oak savanna woodland habitats remaining in Ontario. The unique white oak savanna is also home to the largest population of American Columbo, an endangered plant species, in Canada. Beneath the old open grown white oaks live over 30 specialized plants adapted to the unique conditions: partial sun, drought, neutral pH and frequent low intensity fires.

Support of the project was provided by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Stewardship Ranger Program and the National Wild Turkey Federation which funded the prescribed burn.

Natural Connections Program

Wildlife Habitat Management

Blue Lake White Oak Savanna Restoration



The site is one of the top oak savanna-woodland remnants remaining in the Grand River Plains. Close to 30 plant indicator species are present; triple the usual number. The oak woodland occurs on the slopes above the wetland (picture top left) and has a semi open canopy of oak. The oak savanna pocket occurs on the tableland above the slope where the fire would have burnt hotter, keeping the tree cover reduced. To less than 30% canopy closure (for com-



Invasive species removal is a key part of the project. Foreign plants, such as European buckthorn and tartarian honeysuckle, have been imported to North America from other countries in the past. These plants are spreading uncontrolled throughout the natural environment, displacing Ontario's native species. In 2005 a crew of four 17 years (one of the crew members pictured above) worked for a day and removed 100 alien shrubs from the oak woodland from the property..

A prescribed burn was completed to invigorate the oak savanna and woodland plants. Monitoring after the burn in June and July uncovered a few surprises. One of them was a patch of big bluestem grass, an oak savanna indicator was discovered on the property for the first time, growing in a gray dogwood thicket that encroached on the shade intolerant species. As well new locations on the property for hoary puccoon, another oak savanna species, (pictured above) were discovered. Also seed in a burnt area that had greened up following the burn was a 1 week old deer (pictured right).

