

Gibney Regional Forest



GIBNEY

Region of Waterloo

Regional Forest

Municipality:	Wilmot Township
Location:	Pt. Lot 12 Concession: S.S.R.
Access:	Open to the public; access points on Sandhills Road
General Location:	South of Snyder's Road on Sandhills Road
Size:	8.9 hectares
Physiographic Area:	Waterloo Sandhills
Eco-region:	Wilmot
Associated ESPA(s):	13 (Baden Hills)
Date of Acquisition:	1984
Soils:	Coarse outwash sands and sandy loams predominate

General Description

The Baden Hills ESPA consists of a series of four prominent sandy hills which are some of the largest kames in Southern Ontario. Due to their height, the hills are quite scenic and impressive. They afford extensive views from their summits, especially of the glaciated aspects of the surrounding landscape. Gibney Regional Forest is found on one of these hills on the east side of Sandhills Road.

There are two forest stands and a large field area found in Gibney Regional Forest. The field area has been used to establish a prairie grass nursery and as an experimental agroforestry site. In addition, a neighbouring farmer has been cropping those parts of the field not actively used by the Region. The forest stands are found growing on the slopes of a large kame. The northern part of the kame comprises primarily upland hardwood species while the remainder is conifer plantation.

The steep topography in the central areas tends to exclude casual human access.

General Management Goals

The conifer stand is mature and the White Pine and White Spruce require thinning. Over time, the plantation will be allowed to revert to a mixed hardwood condition as crop trees are removed with thinning and harvest activities. The field area requires a well developed schedule of activities designed to monitor and encourage the development of the prairie grass nursery. Likewise, the agroforestry experimental area requires a re-examination of objectives and the development of a schedule of monitoring and reporting of results.

Facilities

Access to Gibney is either from Sand Hills Road or through the open field to the south. There is no formal parking area, and visitors must park on the shoulder of Sand Hills Road. Access up the west facing slope of the kame is unmarked and requires some effort. The trail that winds through the forest stands is largely overgrown and can be difficult to find.

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Special Considerations

The steep sandy slopes of the kame are slowly stabilizing as access has been restricted by means of a fence which has reduced sand mining by locals. This slope may experience sliding and slumping as trees growing along the edge are undermined and fall over. A primary activity will be ensuring that the bank is planting with ground cover that will aid in both long- and short-term stabilization.

Burning-Bush (*Euonymus atropurpureus*) has been found growing near the top of the kame, although it appears that severe browsing and competition by invasive ground flora has recently had a significant impact on this species.

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Scale: 1 to 3550

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Area: 8.9 ha

