

Cheltenham Badlands set to re-open this summer after three year closure

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After being closed off for nearly three years, the Cheltenham Badlands is expected to open to the public by this summer.

The area was closed off after popularity in the site grew and raised several public safety and conservation issues.

?The thousands of individuals who were visiting the site each year were faced with dangerous conditions stemming from traffic congestion along Olde Baseline Road, due to a lack of dedicated parking facilities at or near the site,? said Catrina Colme, Ontario Heritage Trust (OHT) communications specialist.

?The growth in visitation to the site resulted in significant and measurable erosional impact that threatened the rugged topography of the Badlands.?

She told the Citizen that trail improvements and maintenance works are currently underway, and will be ongoing through the early summer.

Some of the new features to the property are a new parking lot and space, an accessible boardwalk, informational panels describing the site's history and geology, new trailhead signs, and a water crossing.

Ms. Colme said that for the longer-term, the OHT and partners have been working on a Master Plan for the Badlands, ?which will outline the long-term vision for the site as well as identify major projects, new trails and other site enhancements to be implemented in phases over the next several years.?

She added that once the Master Plan is approved by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, they would be raising funds to support each phase.

Ms. Colme explained how the OHT acquired the Badlands back in 2002 to protect the rare and significant topography of the site, and to permanently protect the 1.4 kilometers of the optimum route of the Bruce Trail.

For more information about the Master Plan, visit www.heritagetrust.on.ca/badlands.