

Cheltenham Badlands will be temporarily closed

At the end of May, a protective fence will be erected along Olde Baseline Road, temporarily closing the Cheltenham Badlands to visitors.

The Ontario Heritage Trust, which owns the property, has announced this closure will be while a long-term plan guiding future conservation and public access to the site is under development.

The striking landscape of the Badlands is one of Ontario's geological treasures and is one of the best examples of Badland topography in the province. Over the years, its distinctive landscape has been attracting increasing numbers of visitors, resulting in accelerated erosion of the sensitive red shale surface and permanently changing its unique appearance.

The protective fence is an interim measure to stop further damage to the Badlands while a Master Plan is being developed. As required under the Niagara Escarpment Plan, the Master Plan will address public safety improvements, guide long-term conservation activities and explore options for public enjoyment of the Badlands. An environmental consultant will begin work on the Master Plan this summer, which will take several years to develop and implement.

Temporary closure of the Badlands will not affect sections of the Bruce Trail running through other areas of the property, which will remain open to hikers. The property features 1.4 kilometres of the optimum route of the Bruce Trail.

The Cheltenham Badlands is owned by the Ontario Heritage Trust, which works with a group of partners to manage the property, including the Bruce Trail Conservancy, Region of Peel, Town of Caledon, Caledon Hills Bruce Trail Club, Caledon Countryside Alliance, Caledon Environmental Advisory Committee, Niagara Escarpment Commission and Credit Valley Conservation.

The exposed bedrock at the Badlands is Queenston Shale. This is an iron-rich shale that was deposited more than 445 million years ago.

Due to removal of vegetation during land clearing and livestock grazing in the early 1900s, the shale has eroded into a series of hummocks and gullies, producing the distinctive landscape.

Today, the Badlands is recognized as a provincially significant Earth Science Area of Natural and Scientific Interest

