

## About Our Nature Centre

Exhibits in the Nature Centre provide an opportunity to learn more about local ecology. Naturalists are available to help organize programs and provide interpretive nature tours and hands-on experiences for schools and other organized groups. A fee is required and groups must schedule appointments. The Nature Centre offers a wide variety of programs which include birding, wildlife & wildflower identification, photography courses, as well as nature programs for children and youth. Current offerings are found at [www.ojibway.ca](http://www.ojibway.ca). Two large rooms, equipped with kitchens and presentation equipment, are available for workshops, gatherings or meetings. For inquiries, please phone the Nature Centre at: **519-966-5852**



## About the Park

Ojibway Park constitutes one of the very few tracts of old growth forest left in the City of Windsor. Pin Oak forest, savanna and tallgrass prairie habitats provide a rich diversity of plant and animal life. Prairie wildflower gardens are planted near the Nature Centre. Trails for pedestrian use begin near the Centre and wind throughout the park. Two trails are paved to provide access for strollers and wheelchairs.

*A prairie is wind-coloured grass, dancing in the winds. A prairie is sun-splashed hillside, bright with wildflowers... It is a wild land. Dennis Farley, 1980.*

Ojibway Nature Centre, 5200 Matchette Road, Windsor, ON N9C 4E8

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[www.ojibway.ca](http://www.ojibway.ca)



# OJIBWAY PARK & NATURE CENTRE

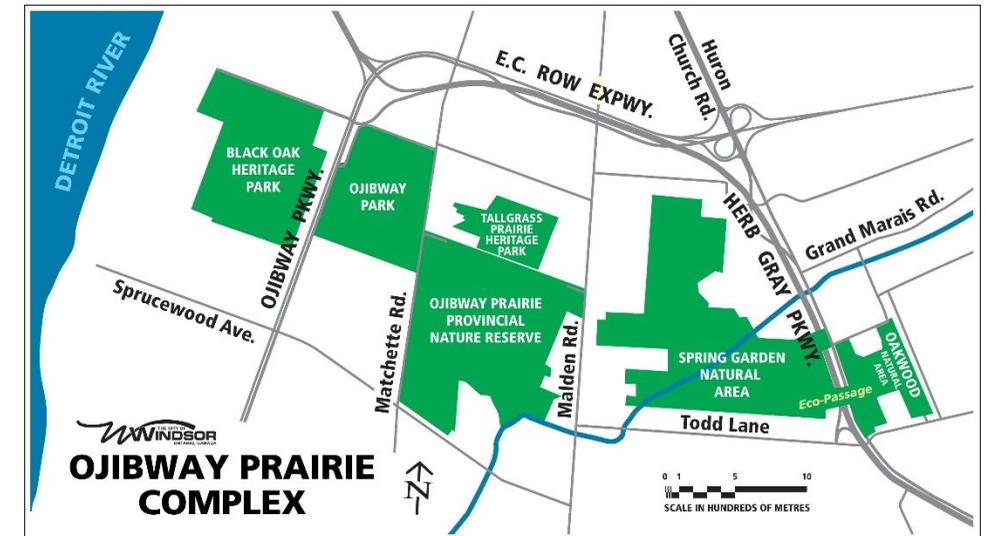


## Hours of Operation

Ojibway Park is open dawn to dusk.

For current Nature Centre hours please check [www.ojibway.ca](http://www.ojibway.ca).

There is no fee for admission or parking.



**Location:** 5200 Matchette Road, one kilometre south of the E.C. Row Expressway.



**All Plants and Animals in the Park are Protected.**

Please do not pick mushrooms, wildflowers, leaves, firewood or disturb any wildlife.

Visit us online at:

[www.ojibway.ca](http://www.ojibway.ca)

There is no charge for admission to Ojibway Nature Centre and Park.

**Land Acknowledgment:** Recognized as one of Canada's most diverse and multicultural communities, Windsor was developed on land that is the traditional territory of the Anishnaabeg people of the Three Fires Confederacy (Ojibwe, Potawatomi, and Odawa). Before Europeans arrived, the land along the Detroit River was referred to as Wawiiatanong by the Indigenous populations. Due to Windsor's unique location along the Detroit River many different groups have called this area home including: Haudenosaunee, Attawandaron (Neutral), and Huron (Wyandot) peoples. Today, many indigenous people and Métis across Turtle Island call this area home. We are thankful to be able to share our history in this area.

***No living man will see again the long-grass prairie, where a sea of prairie lapped at the stirrups of pioneers... We shall do well to find a forty here and there on which the prairie plants can be kept alive as a species. There are a hundred such plants, many of exceptional beauty. Most of them are quite unknown to those who have inherited their domain. Aldo Leopold, 1949.***

**Ojibway Prairie Complex** is made up of six natural areas: Black Oak Heritage Park, Tallgrass Prairie Heritage Park, Spring Garden Natural Area, Oakwood Natural Area, Ojibway Park (all administered by Windsor Department of Parks and Recreation) and Ojibway Prairie Provincial Nature Reserve (administered by Ontario Parks). These 365 hectares of natural space contain endangered habitats such as tallgrass prairie, Pin and Black Oak savanna and also a large number of rare and endangered species. Prairie wildflowers, now considered rare in Ontario, grow in profusion within the complex. The spectacular beauty of the tallgrass prairie is most pronounced in mid-to-late summer.

When the first European explorers arrived in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the tallgrass prairie covered over 40,000 hectares (100,000 acres) of southwestern Ontario. The richness of the prairie soil and ease in preparing the land led to the quick destruction of the tallgrass prairie by early settlers searching for suitable agricultural lands. Today only remnants of this vast landscape remain, surviving in isolated situations such as roadsides, railway right-of-ways and a few parks. However, the sandy soils of the Ojibway area were too wet to be considered prime agricultural land and, as a result, a portion of the prairie still remains. Even though areas of Ojibway remained undeveloped, the resulting roads and ditches from surrounding settlements severely restricted the spread of natural fires. Forests spread into the tallgrass sites, resulting in more forest today than at any time over the past several thousand years.



**Fire:** The word may conjure images of charred desolate ruin, however, fire is an essential component in the maintenance of the tallgrass prairie. Regular controlled burns at Ojibway help to ensure the prairie's survival. A spring burn removes the thick accumulation of dead plant matter from previous years' growth and helps return valuable nutrients to the soil.

Fires also retard the growth of shrubs and trees which are always attempting to invade prairie sites. The finest show of wildflowers occurs after the prairie has been burned.