



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Accessible Trail opens at Historic Fort Willow

Springwater Township, Ontario, September 29, 2017 – Today marked the official opening of a new accessible trail at the Fort Willow Conservation Area in the Township of Springwater.

With funding of up to \$17,500 from the [Canada 150 Community Infrastructure Program](#), delivered in the region by the [Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario](#), the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (NVCA) and volunteers from the Friends of Fort Willow improved the trail, which is now suitable for people of all abilities.

The trail is just one of the enhancements made under the two-year, \$35,000-project to improve the Fort Willow site. Other updates include new interpretive signage, upgrades to the stairs and trailhead entrance, new outlines of the historic buildings, re-creation of the Fur Trader Outpost Building, and the addition of new benches and seating. Additionally, Tourism Simcoe provided funds for updates to the information kiosk at the Fort.

The trail provides all users with access to inside of the palisades at Fort Willow, which is recognized as both a national and provincial historic site. Established at the half-way point between Kempenfelt Bay and the Nottawasaga River, Fort Willow enabled a continuous trade and transportation route from Lake Ontario through to Georgian Bay. During the War of 1812, the British military used the fort as a strategic supply depot along the Nine Mile Portage route.

The opening of the trail also marked the start of the annual Festival at Fort Willow, which takes place Saturday, September 30, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

At the festival, historical re-enactors bring to life the daily activities of British soldiers, camp followers and indigenous people living in Simcoe County in the early 19th century. Visitors can muster-up and march in the King's army, learn about traditional blacksmithing, carpentry and candle making, and listen to the cannons roar.

Admission to the festival is free, but visitors are reminded that there is no parking at Fort Willow unless accessible parking is required. Free parking and shuttle bus to-and-from the site are available at the Grenfel Community Hall at 1989 Sunnidale Road.

For more information on Fort Willow Conservation Area and the Festival at Fort Willow, visit www.nvca.on.ca.

Quotes

"This investment is a community-building project to celebrate Canada's 150th anniversary. There's no better way to mark this milestone than to celebrate the places that bring us together—the places that allow us to stay fit, unwind and connect with our friends and neighbours. That's how we establish the bonds of common understanding and friendship in a country where people come from every corner of the world. The values of openness, diversity and inclusion that define all Canadians are forged in our community spaces."

- *The Honourable Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario*

"As home to historic Fort Willow, the Township of Springwater shares in being a good steward of the Fort Willow Conservation Area. We are pleased to be part of this celebration recognizing the opening of the new accessible trail and share in the pride of making this nationally-significant site available to residents from our local communities and to the many visitors that come to the area each year."

- *Mayor Bill French, Township of Springwater*

"As stewards of Fort Willow Conservation Area, we are pleased to open this new accessible trail and make this nationally-significant site available to everyone in our community."

- *Doug Lougheed, Chair, NVCA Board of Directors*

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About NVCA: The Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority is a public agency dedicated to the preservation of a healthy environment through specialized programs to protect, conserve and enhance our water, wetlands, forests and lands. www.nvca.on.ca

About the Friends of Historic Fort Willow: The Friends of Historic Fort Willow are volunteers working to preserve the original site and its reconstructed features and promote the historical, educational and recreational activities happening at the fort. www.fortwillow.com

About the Township of Springwater: Springwater is a municipality of approximately 18,000 residents located in the heart of Simcoe County. Springwater Township is home to the second largest concentration of County Forests and is a popular destination for outdoor activities in all four seasons. www.springwater.ca

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