

Bristol Creek Natural Area

The *Bristol Creek Natural Area* is 59.1 acres located in Bristol, Kings County, Prince Edward Island. This rich woodland buffers Bristol Creek from surrounding agricultural lands and contributes to the connectivity of forested lands in the area.

Acquisition and Legal Status

The *Bristol Creek Natural Area* was donated to Island Nature Trust by Marilyn Jannus on October 1st, 1993 and designated under the *PEI Natural Areas Protection Act* (NAPA) on May 10th, 1995.

Landscape Context

This property borders Kenovan Road to the west and Bristol Creek, which empties into St Peter's Lake, to the east. To the northwest are active blueberry fields, and to the northeast and south are privately-owned forested lands. A forest fire moved through this area sometime in the mid-1900's and the Kenovan Rd was reportedly extended to give access to fire-fighting equipment.

Plant Community

The *Bristol Creek Natural Area* is composed of dry scrubby softwood transitioning into hardwood as you move east towards the creek. The forest is chiefly composed of balsam fir, white spruce, trembling aspen, white birch and red maple, with black and white spruce and larch trees also occurring. The shrub layer includes serviceberry, wild raisin and mountain ash. Herbaceous plants include at least seven species of fern, jack-in-the-pulpit, pink lady's slipper, twinflower, nodding trillium, blue flag iris, and marsh marigold. The moss and lichen community is also rich, with reindeer lichen, old man's beard and ground pine all occurring in the natural area.

In 2018, a two-acre section on the northwestern boundary that had been previously cleared was replanted in red oak, white pine, red spruce, and chokeberry. Plantings were protected with plastic tree wraps and wire mesh cages to guard against damage from snowshoe hares, and will be monitored for success by Island Nature Trust staff and volunteers.

Riparian Zone

Bristol Creek is the most notable feature of the *Bristol Creek Natural Area*. This stream is naturally gravel-bottomed and suitable for spawning trout and other species of fish. Small Atlantic salmon have been observed using this stream. The riparian zone, or area near the water's edge, plays a crucial role in the lives of in-stream organisms. For example, the large trees in this area provide shade for fish and invertebrates, and bank stabilization to decrease erosion and siltation.

The Morell River Management Cooperative does some in-stream and riparian zone work on this property. In 2017, Morell River Watershed crews removed beaver and windblown trees and installed brushmatting in Bristol Creek.

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Wildlife Community

Mammals observed on the property include beaver, snowshoe hare, American mink, and red squirrel. Bird observations include a dark-eyed junco nesting within the root mass of a downed tree, a bald eagle hunting over the stream, alder flycatcher, hermit thrush, blackburnian warbler, eastern wood-peewee (a Species of Special Concern), boreal chickadee, and signs of a three-toed woodpecker.

Access

The *Bristol Creek Natural Area* can be accessed from the Kenovan Road, off of Route 2 in Bristol. Kenovan Road is located approximately 4 km east of Morell. The northeast corner of the natural area is 0.5 km from the Confederation Trail crossing, and the southeast corner is at the small wooden bridge that crosses Bristol Creek. Those visiting can do so only on foot and should have a good comfort level with navigating using a compass or GPS. There is no parking space along the Kenovan Road, so please ensure you are not blocking road access when visiting this property.



200m

DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, CNES/Airbus DS

The *Bristol Creek Natural Area* is represented in green in the map above.