



Enhancing the Outreach Capacity and Engaging Traditional Plant Knowledge in the Alderville First Nation Black Oak Savanna

With support from the Government of Canada’s [Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk](#) (Prevention Stream), the Alderville First Nation (AFN) conducted a one-year project in 2014–2015 to plan and develop interpretive gardens highlighting the native plants and their significance in the Alderville Black Oak Savanna ([ABOS](#)).

WHY THIS PROJECT IS IMPORTANT

The ABOS is a rare 55-hectare habitat containing many native prairie and savanna plants with medicinal, cultural, and historical significance to the AFN in Ontario. The ABOS is the largest single parcel of its kind left in east-central Ontario. It is a popular ecological restoration area for post-secondary classes, naturalist clubs, and other groups to visit and learn about the restored tallgrass prairie.

WHAT WAS DONE

The AFN consulted with Elders and other community members to document information about the traditional uses and importance of plants in the area. The project team planned nine themed gardens, including a traditional use garden and a habitat garden for species at risk. Most of the plants for the gardens were collected as seeds or cuttings from the ABOS site and stored in preparation for the spring planting season. The gardens demonstrate different aspects of the ABOS site and habitat, the area’s conservation values, and the cultural significance of native plants. The gardens allow community members, specifically Elders, to visit the area without having to navigate the uneven terrain in the ABOS site. Information and stories about the plants are included in brochures and displayed on garden signage in both Ojibway and English.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THIS PROJECT

- Consulted with 40 Elders and community members to gather and document information on which plants to use and the traditional use and importance of the plants.
- Designed and planned nine interpretative gardens.
- Acquired tools, plants, and materials to prepare the garden site for planting.



SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROJECT

Partnerships made with Traditional Knowledge holders within the AFN influenced the design and planning of traditional medicinal and educational gardens at the ABOS site. The gardens will continue to act as an education tool to attract visitors to the ABOS and increase the public’s interest and knowledge about the native plants and their significance.

INVESTMENT: 2014–2015

Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk Funds:	\$12,600
Partner Support Leveraged:	\$3,750
TOTAL:	\$16,350