



## Discover Portage Road Lesson Plan

### Stella Niagara Preserve

Subject Area: Science

**Grades 6-8**

**Subject Area**      Science

#### **New York State P-12 Common Core Learning Standards for Mathematics, Science and Technology**

Standard 1: Students will use mathematical analysis, scientific inquiry, and engineering design, as appropriate, to pose questions, seek answers, and develop solutions.

##### 1.1 Scientific Inquiry

1.11 The central purpose of scientific inquiry is to develop explanations of natural phenomena in a continuing, creative process

1.12 Beyond the use of reasoning and consensus, scientific inquiry involves the testing of proposed explanations involving the use of conventional techniques and procedures and usually requiring considerable ingenuity

Standard 2: Students will access, generate, process, and transfer information using appropriate technologies

##### 2.1 Information Systems

2.11 Information technology is used to retrieve, process, and communicate information and as a tool to enhance learning.

### **Overview**

On October 4th 2013, The Western [New York](#) Land Conservancy was awarded \$1,843,487 from the Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Fund toward creating the Stella Niagara Preserve. The fund was created as part of the Niagara River Greenway from the Niagara Power Project relicensing agreement. Combined with the \$500,000 received from the Greenway Ecological Standing Committee, the Land Conservancy received more than \$2.3 million to create the first nature preserve along the Niagara River to be owned and operated by a not-for-profit.

Located on Lower River Road in the Town of Lewiston, across from the Stella Niagara Education Park and Center of Renewal, the 29-acre Stella Niagara Preserve property includes more than a quarter mile of scenic shoreline along the Niagara River and supports rare plants and animals. The 29-acre portion was part of a 130-acre property previously owned by the Sisters of St. Francis/

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Stella Niagara is a gateway between the Niagara River and New York state's 62nd Senate District, which I represent," said Sen. George D. Maziarz. "This project will help improve the region's already high quality of life, and preserve our unique cultural and natural heritage."



Source: <http://www.wnylc.org/StellaNiagara.html>

The Western [New York](#) Land Conservancy, a regional not-for-profit land trust, created the Stella Niagara Preserve, the first nature preserve along the Niagara River to be owned and operated by a not-for-profit organization. The Stella Niagara Preserve is located on the shores of the Niagara River at 4421 Lower River Road in the Town of Lewiston. The Land Conservancy has opened the property to public access. It has developed a walking trail system, provided new fishing, canoe and [kayak](#) access and placed an entry kiosk. Also, the Land Conservancy has developed interpretive signage, restored 18 acres of grassland habitat, and held events and hikes. It is committed to stewardship of the property.

The Stella Niagara Conservancy is a 29-acre site with 1,474 feet of Niagara River shoreline. It is the third longest privately owned river frontage in Niagara County—and is one of the few undeveloped privately owned tracts of land along the river. The Stella Niagara preserve has tremendous ecological importance. It is part of an internationally designated globally significant Important Bird Area.

Sustaining rare, threatened and endangered plants and animals, the Stella Niagara property has habitat of such diversity and quality that it was placed on the Niagara River Area of Concern priority habitat list in 2012. It, therefore, is an international priority for protection. The property's gentle slope down to the river makes it one of the few natural landing sites on the Lower Niagara. Known locally as the 'Stella Drift, shallow off-shore shoal, known locally as the 'Stella Drift,' creates ideal conditions for fishing. The site has ideal factors for public access.

According to land conservancy staff, the Stella Niagara Preserve has tremendous ecological importance. It has a variety of habitats, including a riparian zone, a large

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meadow, and a forest area. Stella Niagara Preserve includes Nivernal pools that support rare plants and animals such as the threatened Lake Sturgeon and the endangered shrub called Ninebark. The shallow off-shore shoal supports larval smallmouth bass, yellow perch and rock bass.

It is also archaeologically significant with evidence of continuous Haudenosaunee use. The location was an important canoe landing site for the Haudenosaunee. It also has historical significance because it is where the British landed in 1813 to invade the United States. A nationally designated Peace Site, the Stella Niagara Preserve is part of the Niagara County Historic Trail.

The Stella Niagara Preserve protects and enhances those critical habitats, celebrates important natural and cultural resources, and improves Niagara River access. Fulfilling the goals of the Niagara River Greenway, it exemplifies Olmsted's original vision of a necklace of open spaces along the length of the Niagara River. A public private partnership, it involves a not-for-profit organization taking the lead and committing to long-term legal and financial responsibility for the preserve. without burdening public agencies with increased costs, it represents a model for creating new, high quality public spaces along the Niagara River Greenway

### **Activity**

Students will:

- Discuss the importance of maintaining habitats,
- Explain the importance of Nature Preserves, and
- Research and describe the characteristics of the grassland habitat,

### **References**

*Land Conservancy: \$1.8 million for Stella Niagara Preserve at*  
<http://www.wnypapers.com/news/article/current/2013/10/04/112883/land-conservancy-1.8-million-for-stella-niagara-preserve>

*Western New York Land Conservancy: Stella Niagara Preserve at*  
[www.wnyc.org/StellaNiagara.html](http://www.wnyc.org/StellaNiagara.html)

*Western New York Land Conservancy awarded \$500,000 for Stella Niagara Preserve at*  
<http://www.wnypapers.com/news/article/current/2013/08/06/112069/western-new-york-land-conservancy-awarded-500000-for-stella-niagara-preserve>