

An aerial photograph of a large, circular bay or lake. The water is a deep, dark blue-green color, and the shoreline is rocky and rugged. The bay is surrounded by a thick forest of green trees. The overall scene is a natural, undisturbed landscape.

# BayNiche Conservancy

A Private conservation initiative on Lake Superior

[www.bayniche-conservancy.ca](http://www.bayniche-conservancy.ca)

Since 1986 approximately 2km of shoreline and 730 acres of Lake Superior watershed have been protected, despite MNDM efforts to drive property owners off “inactive claims”. Unfortunately, instead of modeling responsible private land stewardship, we demonstrate how to butt heads with the Ministry of Mines. We are determined to maintain the superior water quality of the Eastern Shore.

An aerial photograph of a coastline. The top half shows a large, dark blue wave curling over, with white foam visible as it breaks. Below the wave, the ocean transitions to a lighter blue and greenish hue. The bottom half of the image shows a sandy beach with some dark, rocky or seaweed-covered areas. The overall scene is dynamic and captures the power of the ocean.

# Snapping Baselines

**Sharing Information and Inspiration with Photo Point Monitoring**

**By**

**C. Bayne & G. Browne**

Thoreau likened the degradation of Nature to the tearing of pages from great literature.

With photo point monitoring we keep our collective memory vivid with illustrations and augment all other forms of environmental monitoring. The ability of pictures to document and persuade makes them a powerful tool for calling to account and for halting the downward slide of baselines.



Who has not returned to a favourite  
view or cherished spot!



Unconsciously and without training we  
record important data.





Are we not moved to preserve for posterity, particularly that which we perceive to be threatened?



Changes in flowering time, air quality, foliage change, ice formation, are readily observed in context.



Photo point monitoring systematizes. Add dates to these casual shots and they become scientifically useful and can enhance and support citizen science programs such as NatureWatch.

Throughout history amateur observers have made valuable contributions to various fields of study.

# Reclamation Panorama Panorama remis en état

VETAC



Limed and Seeded in 1979 / Terrain chaulé et ensemencé en 1979  
Trees Planted in 1987 / Arbres plantés en 1987

Limed in 1997 /  
Terrain chaulé en 1997

Not Reclaimed / Terrain non remis en état



Cameras are now so ubiquitous they have hybridized with cell phones! Both the public and the equipment are sophisticated enough to be easily recruited to environmental monitoring. This example of an existing interpretive site shows potential for conversion to photo point monitoring. With a few simple improvements, including instructions and an invitation to participate it could be turned into a fascinating temporal study.





Unless we are engaged in science simply to play better brinksmanship with the environment we can't afford to waste any opportunity to engage the public. How much more interesting could you have made the Reclamation Panorama with some seasonal colour or a better vantage point?

Green Creek  
August 7, 2005 15:32h  
Camera 1: Nikon D70  
Focal length: 18mm



The Ontario Benthos Biomonitoring Network suggests (as do most other aquatic monitoring protocols), a photograph of the stream reach under study. BayNiche is a certified participant and uses photo point monitoring to compliment and corroborate data. Use your powers of observation to compare the following shots. Note labels which provide vital stats.

Green Creek  
October 8, 2005 15:03h  
Camera 1: Nikon D70  
Focal length: 18mm



Required information on field sheets includes; riparian vegetative community, right and left bank; substrate, dominant and second dominant; organic matter; and water course characterization.

Green Creek  
January 6, 2006 15:49h  
Camera 1: Nikon D70  
Focal length: 18mm



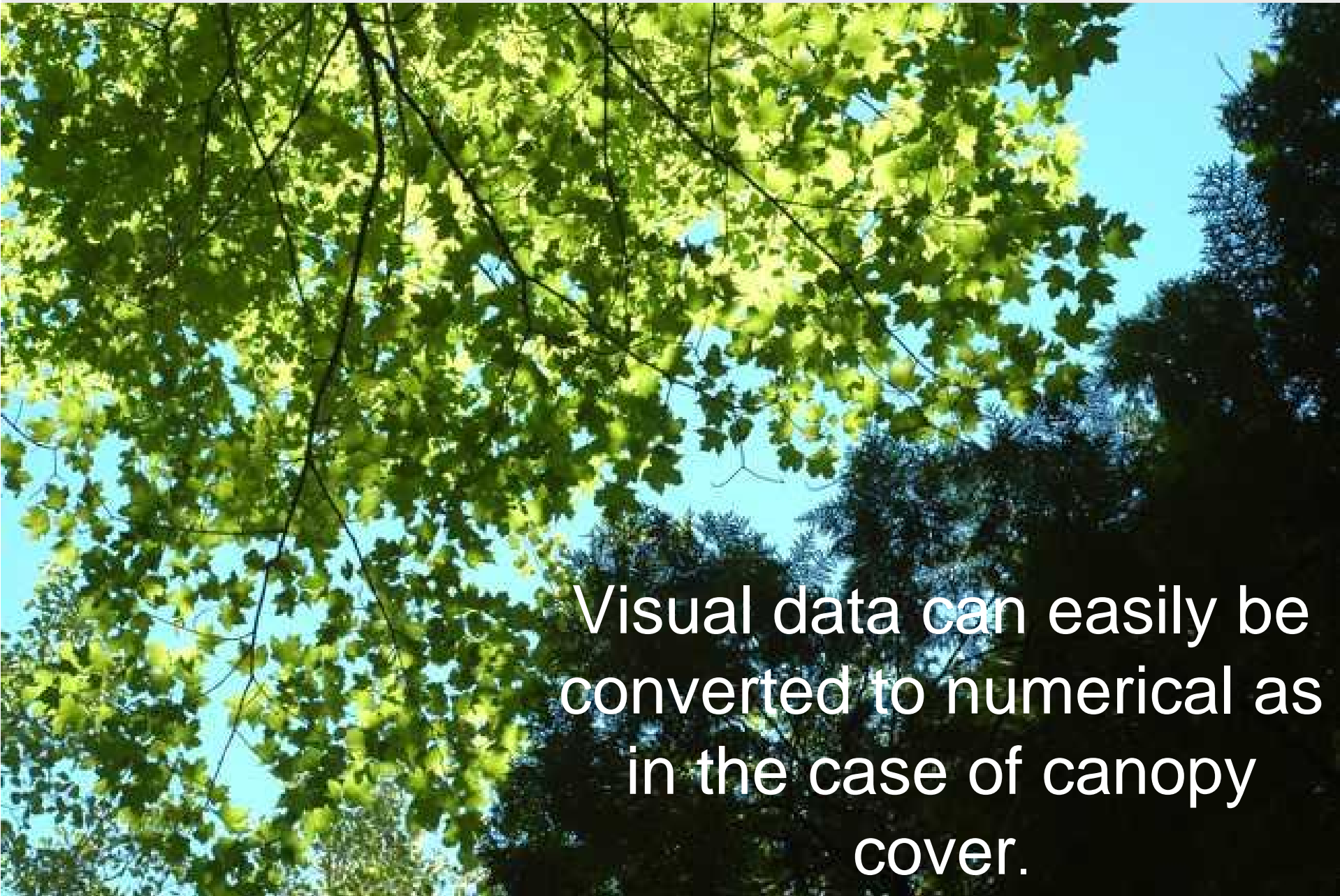
In addition to seeing the above data in context you may note flushing flows and the deposition of woody debris, which are helpful in explaining population anomalies which could occur.



Green Creek  
April 13, 2006 13:06h  
Camera 2: Nikon D100  
Focal length: 18mm

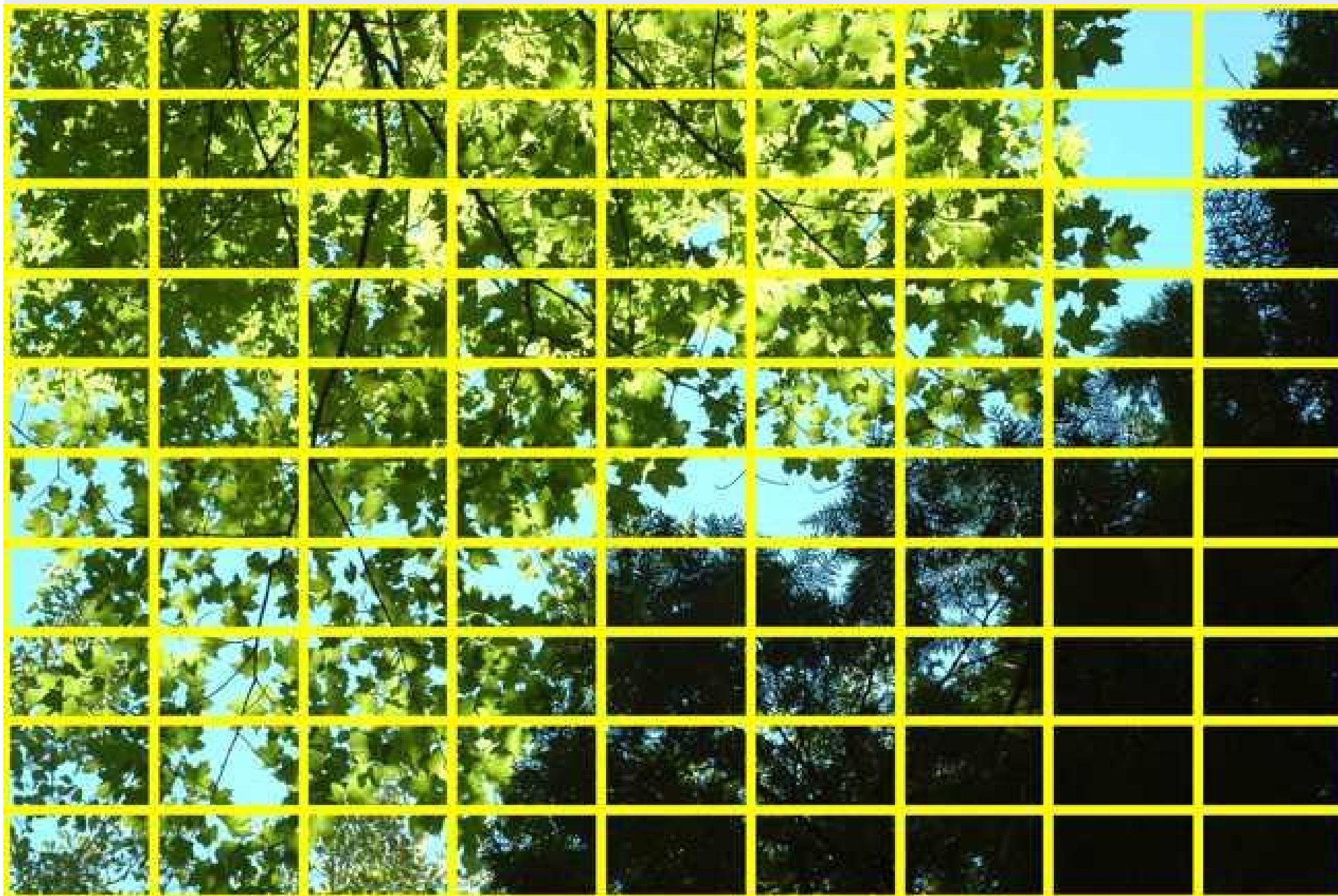


Involving volunteers in stream sampling, however desirable, is a logistical challenge. Photo point activity can engage volunteers independently in providing snapshots of environmental conditions to augment the regular sampling schedule.



Visual data can easily be converted to numerical as in the case of canopy cover.

Green Creek, Replicate 1, 92% canopy cover, July 19, 2005 15:09h



A simple grid facilitates calculation of percent values. Fredrick Hall, of the Pacific Northwest Forestry Service, is THE source for more than you ever thought of asking about photo point monitoring and analysis.



To reach a wider population and prove our theory that photo point is easy and fun we set out to establish a public/private site. The view is of Theano Point, another area, privately owned but for a 300ft. band of shoreline, which is at risk of mining activity. The reconnaissance mission to this highway pull off at Alona Bay promptly illustrated the importance of location, location, location! Though wheelchair accessible the spot was also favoured by semi-trailer drivers...

Note the ice!







The relocation permitted use of an existing post as a camera support and subsequent conversion to digital format camera eliminated the need for signage (see Fredrick Hall) used for archival reference.  
Date: Site: Camera Number: etc.

Point Photo Point A, February 22, 2005 13:11h  
Alona Bay/Theano Point  
Camera 1: D70  
Focal length: 50mm



**Note the ice now!**



The sport of geocaching grew out of a marketing ploy for Global Positioning System units and good old-fashioned orienteering skills. The game is to find a cache using GPS co-ordinates listed on [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com) . This site was set up as a traditional hidden cache.



The cache includes a large panorama which, for interest sake, will be changed seasonally to present a view contrasting to the real time one. The instructions for photographing the panorama are printed with pictures of points of interest and interpretive information. The notch illustrated is featured as the starting point for the panorama as well as being the location for a second photopoint. This point-within-a-point is a common wrinkle in the game. Multiple copies of the instruction sheet are included so that the tradition of “something taken, something left” is also respected..

[www.baywatch-consultancy.ca](http://www.baywatch-consultancy.ca)

For those who wish to take engage in a photo point monitoring exercise we have set up a participatory photo point monitoring program of Theano Point here on Alota Bay. Any person wishing to contribute to the record may do so by emailing us a series of photos they have taken following the step by step instructions set out below.

Photo point monitoring is a quick, effective method for documenting changes in vegetation and soil, the effects of logging, changes in wildlife habitat, livestock grazing impacts, ice phenology, or the stream channel reaction to land management decisions. Land managers, foresters, wildlife biologists, and land owners may find this monitoring system useful.

On the back of this page are some close-ups of features found on Theano Point and Ossifrage Island.



1- The picture must be taken with a 35mm SLR or a digital SLR camera equipped with a lens set to a focal length of 30mm.

2- Set up your camera on top of the blue post at coordinates N47 09.640 W84.41.553, pictured in the photograph, above left.



3- Holding the camera level on top of the post, frame the first picture of the series so as to include the 'notch' on the right side of the horizon (pictured at left). This is the anchor for the series of photos.

4- Take a series of 3 overlapping pictures panning to the left such that the left edge of the preceding photo becomes the right edge of the succeeding one (so there is a small overlap between the photos) and the last photo encompasses the

island off the tip of Theano Point. This allows us to merge the three pictures into one panorama and provides visual points of reference and continuity when looking at the photos individually.



5- Once taken, email us the three photos as JPEGs, TIFs or BMPs to [photos@baywatch-consultancy.ca](mailto:photos@baywatch-consultancy.ca) please include the date and time of day the pictures were taken as well as your name if you wish credit for them. We will turn them into a panorama and include them in the record of the Theano Point photo point monitoring displayed on our web site [www.baywatch-consultancy.ca](http://www.baywatch-consultancy.ca).

Have fun!



The logbook is an essential part of the cache and provides instant feedback! Some simply sign in, possibly with a short comment as did "Rebel". Others give indication of having taken photos to send us. This cache is hidden in plain sight and so is listed as a site where some stealth is required...lest muggles (non-geocachers) riffle the cache.



DATE FEB 7, 2006  
APPOINTMENTS  
GEOCACHE Log Book

PHOTO POINT A  
ALONA BAY

IF YOU WISH TAKE 3

OVERLAPPING PICTURES USING

A 50mm LENS, START AT

THE NOTCH ON THE RIGHT AND

END AT THE ISLAND, AS SHOWN

ON THE ENCLOSED PICTURE.

SEND YOUR PICS, WITH DATE &

TITLE TAKEN (AND YOUR NAME IF

YOU WANT) TO:

Photo c Bayniche-conservancy.ca

AND WE'LL POST YOUR

PANORAMA ON OUR WEBSITE,

www.bayniche-conservancy.ca

March 7/2006

Short Clear  
Day, great  
view

REBEL

APRIL 5/06

MITZAHUNG  
Great Dinosaur

MELISSA

Good trip in Region  
found places like

that about 1000

about 1000

about 1000

TFC

about 1000

A photograph showing a blue pipe in the foreground, partially obscured by bare trees. The pipe is capped with a blue cap. In the background, there is a large body of water (likely a lake) and a distant landmass or island. The sky is clear and blue. The text is overlaid on the image.

**Now capped the blue pipe serves both as camera support and weather proof hiding place.**

Great celebrations ensued when the first shots taken by a perfect stranger were emailed to us and the panorama was assembled and archived with our others. Even more thrilling will be the first time a stranger sends us GPS coordinates for a photopoint of their creation! It will be a good indication that they have found a new way to look at their surroundings and possibly that new values have been internalized.



April 23, 2006 10:00h

Photo courtesy: Greg Barton



May 21, 2005 13:10h

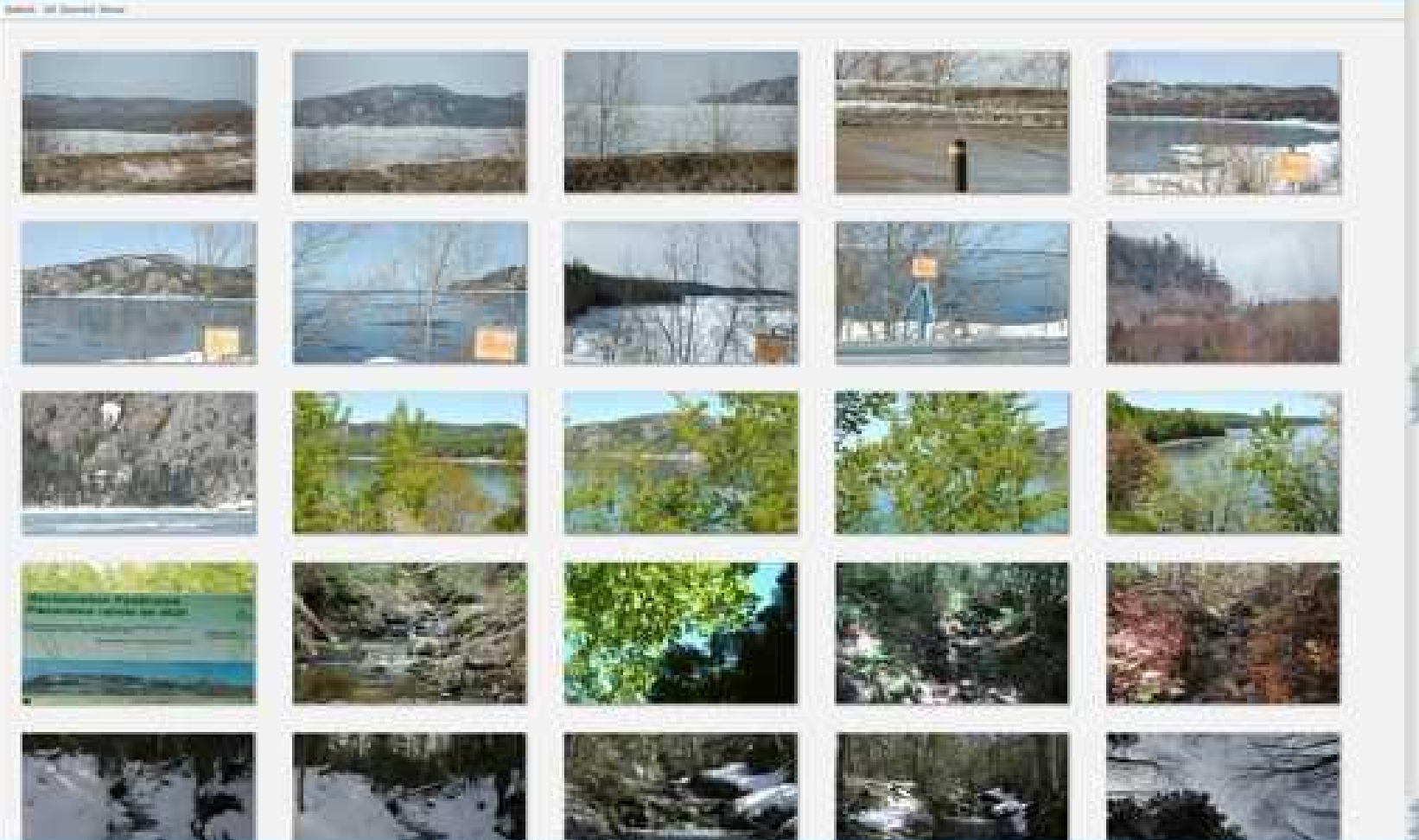


June 1, 2005 11:40h

Picasa 2 is a powerful but easy to use tool for image handling which is available as a free download from Google. The general public can maintain an archive of their own photos as well as make them available to others over the internet. Sharing information and inspiration has never been easier.

- Home on Disk (183)
- 2008
- Photographs on Disk (1)
- Shopping Reserves (27)
- 2008-08-08 (10)
- 2008-08-09 (10)
- 2008-08-10 (10)
- 2008-08-11 (10)
- 2008-08-12 (10)
- 2008-08-13 (10)
- 2008-08-14 (10)
- 2008-08-15 (10)
- 2008-08-16 (10)
- 2008-08-17 (10)
- 2008-08-18 (10)
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- 2008-12-30 (10)
- 2008-12-31 (10)

### Shopping Reserves July 2008



Photopoint has a place within any science program which purports to involve the public. For minimal cost and training, participants can share valuable information and personal inspiration. With a little imagination photopoint can be incorporated into parks and trail systems and stimulate the development of a caretaker philosophy to replace that which drives the consumer society.



**Useful links and more Alona  
panoramas**  
[www.bayniche-conservancy.ca/bayniche035.htm](http://www.bayniche-conservancy.ca/bayniche035.htm)



To contribute comments, photopoint  
GPS coordinates or pictures, use  
PHOTO in the subject line and email  
to:

[photo@bayniche-conservancy.ca](mailto:photo@bayniche-conservancy.ca)



Thank you

[www.bayniche-conservancy.ca](http://www.bayniche-conservancy.ca)