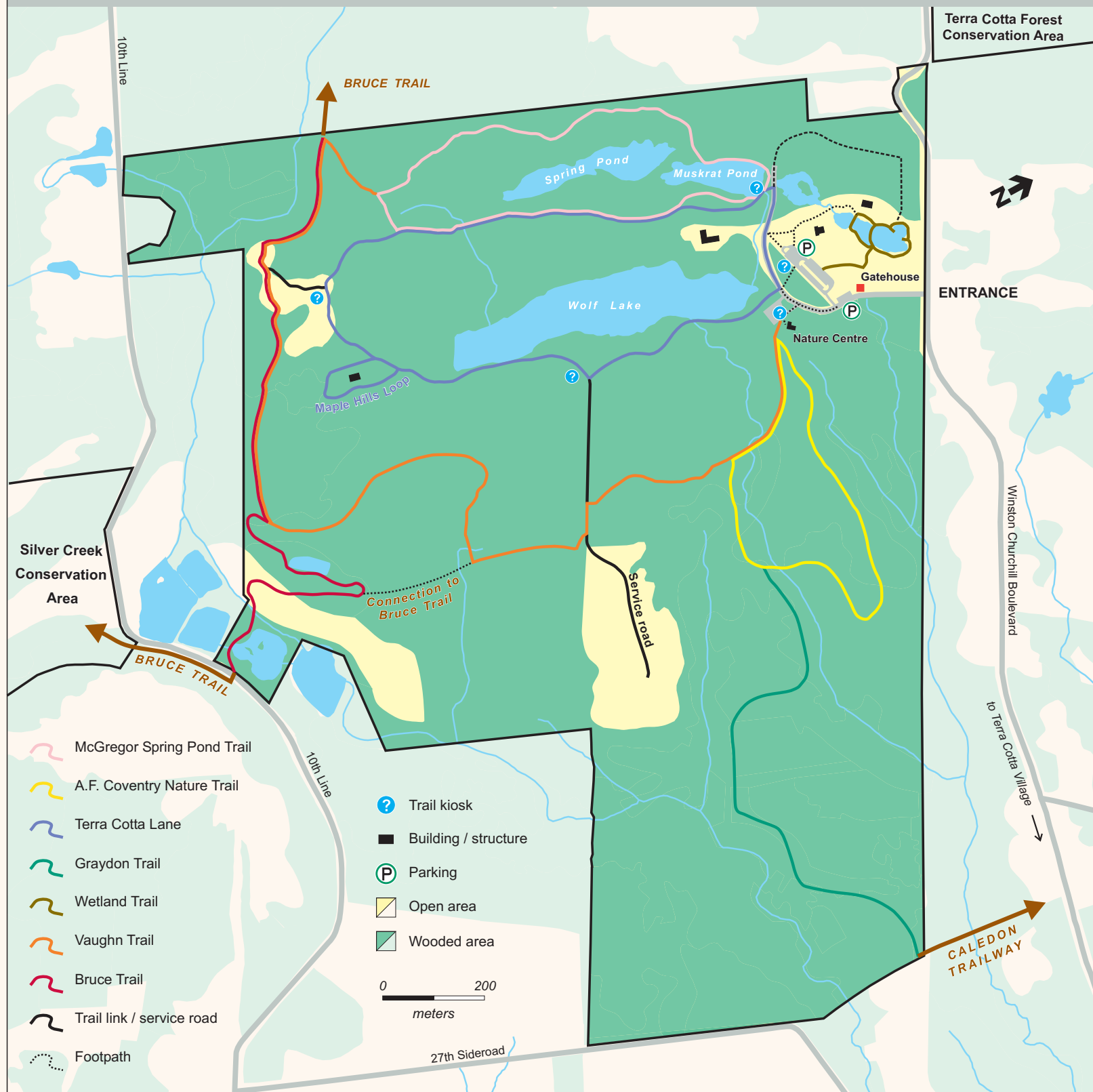


Centre for Environmental Learning



Terra Cotta Conservation Area: Centre For Environmental Learning



Located on the beautiful Niagara Escarpment (a World Biosphere Reserve) and close to the geographic center of the Credit River watershed, Terra Cotta Conservation Area is an outdoor enthusiast's dream. Stroll around our award-winning human-created wetland, and watch for signs of wildlife now returning to the area, or travel deep into the escarpment woodlands to explore its rugged landscapes. Whether strolling along a pond loop trail, enjoying the forest community, picnicking, or casting a line in Wolf Lake, you will experience nature close up at Terra Cotta Conservation Area; a center for environmental learning.

The Trails of Terra Cotta

At Terra Cotta, we have created a network of interconnected hiking trails, footpaths and old roadways that will take you to different parts of the conservation area where you can experience a mosaic of natural and cultural settings. Many of the trails are named for individuals or families that have influenced this area of escarpment land. Some trails are complete loops and some are linear, with links to others. Use the trail descriptions and map to decide the best route and always plan ahead.

The Bruce Trail - 1.6km, 1 hour

A portion of the famous Bruce Trail travels through Terra Cotta on its way between Queenston and Tobermory. Accessed from 10th Line Road and always recognized by white trail markers, the trail passes ponds and exposed red clay hills (similar to nearby Badlands). The Bruce Trail connects and follows the Vaughn, but is still marked by white paint. The Bruce Trail is not a loop and is isolated and rugged in spots, so plan accordingly. (Blue markers identify Bruce Trail side-trails).

The A.F. Coventry Nature Trail - 1.2km one way, 1 hour

Starting near the Nature Centre, the trail meanders through different examples of forest communities that are home to birds of prey, mammals and other wildlife. This moderate trail starts 100 meters southeast of the Nature Centre building and ends at the Vaughn Trail, which you can follow back to the parking area. There are some elevation changes so plan accordingly.

The Graydon Trail - 1.2km, 1 hour

Beginning in the southeastern portion of the conservation area near the Caledon Trailway off Winston Churchill Boulevard, this route is a Bruce Trail side-trail. Taking you past old conifer plantations, valley edges and into mature forest stands, this trail connects to the A.F. Coventry Nature Trail, which you can follow back to the Terra Cotta parking area or to the Vaughn Trail which eventually connects with the Bruce. The Graydon Trail is isolated and rugged in spots so plan accordingly.

Wetland Trail - 0.6km, 0.5 hour

Starting from beside the gatehouse or from the parking area, the Wetland trail lets you explore our unique, human-restored wetland ecosystem. With the old public swimming pool removed, we have created a home for a number of floral and faunal species common to a typical Ontario wetland that you can see from shore or boardwalk. This easy trail is great for all ages and there are a number of other footpaths in the area to explore.

The Vaughn Trail - 2.8km one way, 2.5 hours

Beginning beside the Nature Centre Trail Kiosk, the Vaughn Trail is an excellent way to explore deep into Terra Cotta. Peer into lush valley floors, enjoy mature forest stands or experience edge ecosystems, where forest meets field. The Vaughn Trail connects in places with Terra Cotta Lane and ends at the McGregor Spring Pond Trail and you can follow either back to the parking area. This moderate trail is long, rugged in spots and takes you over varying terrain so plan accordingly.

The McGregor Spring Pond Trail - 1.8km loop, 1 hour

The McGregor Spring Pond Trail loop starts and finishes at the Muskrat Pond Trail Kiosk. Follow the shore of a spring-fed pond and watch for surfacing fish, muskrats or turtles. Stroll through mixed deciduous forest and listen for songbirds or try to catch the sounds of different frogs as they all compete for prime wetland real estate. This easy trail is great for any nature lover.

Terra Cotta Lane - 3.2km loop, 1 hour

Terra Cotta Lane is a great way to introduce yourself to this conservation area and is a major access route to some of our other trails. Starting near the parking area, the trail follows an old road along the eastern shore of a pond and eventually loops back to the parking area. Although this trail is a loop, there are a number of one-way arms that allow you access to the Vaughn and McGregor Spring Pond trails. This easy trail is good for nature enthusiasts of all ages.

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