



ViewPoint

Trafalgar Moraine and the 16 Mile Creek Valley

Summary

The Trafalgar Moraine is a natural feature in the Halton watershed that stretches from the Niagara Escarpment in Burlington through north Oakville to the City of Mississauga. This important area is characterized by gently rolling hills, forests, creeks and wetlands. The Sixteen Mile Creek valley, with a spectacular gorge, cuts through the Moraine and the underlying Queenston shale as it winds through the lower portion of its watershed in Milton and Oakville. The East Sixteen Mile Creek forms the northern boundary of the Trafalgar Moraine. The main branch of the Sixteen Mile Creek valley bisects north Oakville, an area that is proposed for urban expansion. Conservation Halton believes that there is an opportunity to create an environmental legacy in north Oakville and south Milton by protecting the natural heritage system associated with the Trafalgar Moraine and the Sixteen Mile Creek valley.

Conservation Halton recognizes that there are a number of significant natural features associated with the Trafalgar Moraine and the Sixteen Mile Creek valley.

The Trafalgar Moraine plays a beneficial role in moderating local hydrology and also provides recharge and discharge functions.

The Trafalgar Moraine is associated with the presence of many wetlands and the origins of several creeks including Fourteen Mile Creek, McCraney, Sixteen Mile (Shannon's and Oseneo tributaries), Munn's, Morrison and Joshua's.

The Sixteen Mile Creek valley is an Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI) noted for its large valley and tableland oak forests. The ANSI supports a large number of provincially and regionally rare plant and animal species, and vegetation communities.

Since 1958, Conservation Halton has identified lands associated with the Sixteen Mile Creek for greenspace and conservation purposes. This included lands in Oakville along the Sixteen Mile Creek in the vicinity of the hamlet of Glenorchy north of Highway 5 and south of Lower Base Line. Much of these lands are currently owned by the Ontario Realty Corporation.

In early conservation reports prepared by the Provincial Government these lands were identified as an ideal candidate conservation area and given the name Glenorchy Conservation Area. The 1983 Interim Watershed Plan prepared by Conservation Halton reconfirmed the interest in these lands.



Conservation Halton is very interested in a possible dedication of parkland associated with the Trafalgar Moraine and Sixteen Mile Creek currently owned by the Ontario Realty Corporation. If the lands are dedicated, Conservation Halton would be receptive to accepting ownership and managing these significant conservation lands for future generations.

Conservation Halton's viewpoint on the Trafalgar Moraine and Sixteen Mile Creek valley promotes the value of these lands for enhancing biodiversity in the watershed and as critical greenspace for expanding communities. It also details the benefits of creating a new conservation area that forms a core area that is linked to Ontario's Niagara Escarpment and the Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt.

A Natural Legacy for Future Generations

Conservation Halton believes that the Province of Ontario has a great opportunity to create an environmental legacy in north Oakville by protecting a significant natural heritage system associated with the Trafalgar Moraine and the Sixteen Mile Creek valley. The system provides a link to the Bronte, Sixteen Mile and Joshua's Creeks valleys and acts as a spur off the provincial corridor associated with the Niagara Escarpment.

The lands associated with the "Oakville Land Assembly" owned by the Ontario Realty Corporation form a significant part of the Natural Heritage System. In addition to the 1,100 acres associated with the Oakville Land Assembly, there is a further 640 acres owned by ORC that contain significant portions of the Sixteen Mile Creek valley and associated tablelands.

Setting aside these lands for conservation protection would be a significant contribution to greenspace in north Oakville. The lands have the potential to create large forest tracts that would provide interior forest habitat. In addition, the lands are characterized by undulating topography, numerous small wetlands and the headwaters of several local streams. Site-specific surveys have identified the presence of western chorus frogs utilizing these wetlands. Herpetologists are finding significant declines in these frogs relating to loss of habitat. Setting aside the lands would also retain large areas of meadow and related habitats. Such areas are difficult to protect and maintain in a landscape that is slated for development. Species dependant on such habitats are declining and rapidly being lost across Southern Ontario. The ability to set aside such a large conservation protection area would allow for the preservation of a variety of habitats that are important to the ecological integrity of our natural landscapes.

The creation of this large regional protection area also complements the vision and goals of the Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt.



Conservation Halton

Natural Champion for a Healthy Watershed

Conservation Halton is the community based environmental agency that protects, restores and manages the natural resources in its watershed. Conservation Halton has staff that includes ecologists, land use planners, engineers, foresters and educators along with a network of volunteers who are guided by a Board of Directors that includes municipally elected and appointed citizens. Conservation Halton is recognized for its stewardship of creeks, forests and Niagara Escarpment lands through science based programs and services.

For more information about the Trafalgar Moraine and the Sixteen Mile Creek Valley, please contact:



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