



“It isn't easy being green.”

Kermit the Frog

“Trees are poems that the earth writes upon the sky.”

Kahlil Gibran

9 Pause for a moment and rest beneath this gnarly old sugar maple on your right. This giant was a sapling when Kingston served as Canada's capital from 1841-44. This tree's longevity represents a link between past and present and a reminder of the complex relationships between plants, animals and people in this wetland community.

10 The remains of an old beaver dam lie at your feet as you stand on the platform to the left. Beavers, nature's engineers, create habitat and communities for themselves and other species by damming streams. Here at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area, we are obliged occasionally to contest Mr. Beaver's engineering works to control flooding.

11 Small ponds, mere puddles really, dot this forest floor. These are habitat for a variety of frog species. Frogs are environmental bellwethers, one of the first creatures to reflect environmental degradation. Their ponds also provide breeding grounds for dragonflies and other insects . . . even mosquitoes. See if you can spot some other mini ponds along the trail.

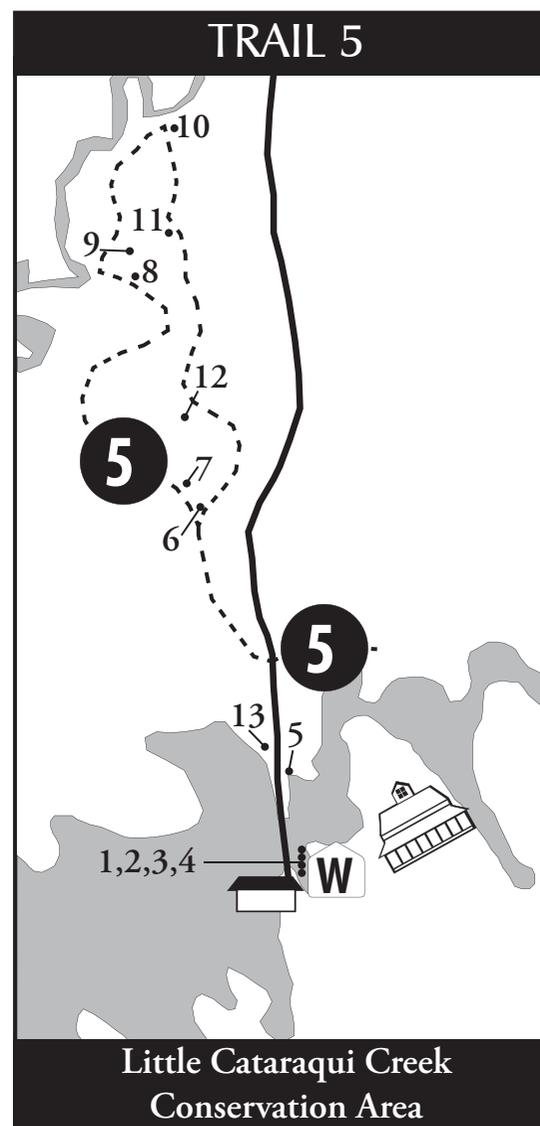
12 It has been estimated that about one-third of Ontario plant species are invaders from other continents, such as purple loosestrife, found throughout these wetlands. These tend to crowd out native species, often upsetting nature's balance.

13 Common cattails that border the wetland and forest ponds perform an essential service. They absorb nitrogen, phosphorous and other pollutants or substances without suffering adverse effects. Cattails also contain an antibiotic substance that attacks and kills fecal bacteria. Cattails are nature's water purification system.



“The outstanding scientific discovery of the twentieth century is not television, or radio, but rather the complexity of the land organism.”

Aldo Leopold



A Healthy Wetlands, Healthy Communities project of the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority and its conservation partners:

- Ducks Unlimited
- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources
- Community Foundation of Greater Kingston

WORDS to CONSERVE

An Interpretive Trail Brochure for Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area



In wilderness is the preservation of the world.

Henry David Thoreau



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“Man shapes himself through decisions that shape his environment.”

Rene Dubos

“When we show respect for other living things, they respond with respect for us.”

Arapaho Proverb

“Are not these woods/More free from peril than the envious court?”

William Shakespeare

“Ecology has become the political substitute for the word ‘mother’.”

Jesse Unruh

How to Use this Brochure

Welcome to Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area

Brochure numbers correspond to trail stations marked by numbered posts. Distances vary between posts along Trail 5, Chickadee Lane. For your comfort, benches are located conveniently along the 0.91 km length of this trail. It takes between 20 and 30 minutes to complete the trail’s loop.

Please Observe the Rules

- Don’t litter
- No alcohol
- Stay on the trail
- Dogs must be leashed
- Do not pick up or remove anything living or dead
- Fires only in fire pits or barbecues in picnic areas, and
- Take only pictures, leave only footprints



“When words become unclear, I shall focus with photographs. When images become inadequate, I shall be content with silence.”

Ansel Adams

1 The Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area consists of 394 hectares of mixed forest and Class I Provincially Significant Wetland. Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA) dammed Little Cataraqui Creek in 1971 to control flooding. Today, the resulting reservoir and surrounding land shelter diverse plant and animal communities.

2 About 12,000 years ago, a mighty glacier gouged out this valley, already defined by an ancient river. The retreating glacier deposited clay and silt formations called cross valley moraines. Several are evident on the reservoir’s south side.

3 From spring to autumn, this causeway is bounded by wildflowers. Each blooming masterpiece follows another through a wondrous cycle of successive species’ flowerings.

“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes.”

Marcel Proust

4 Look up; you may spy an osprey, a fish hawk that hunts by diving for its scaly prey. Many other bird species live or visit here. Arrivals and departures of Canada geese, ducks, herons, gulls, terns, bitterns and other birds reflect the seasons’ eternal cycle.

5 In spring, turtles bury their eggs in soft wetland soil. Some eggs are devoured before hatching by raccoons during nocturnal raids. Snapping and painted turtles predominate, but this armoured community includes a diversity of species.

“Unless man can make new and original adaptations to his environment as rapidly as his science can change the environment, our culture will perish.”

Carl Rogers



6 Welcome to Chickadee Lane, surrounded by mixed forest that includes red, white and jack pine trees planted in the 1980s. These harbour chickadees that welcome visitors who handfeed them in late autumn and throughout the winter. Stand very still. Extend a seed-filled palm and chickadees will dart in to snatch your offering.

7 You’re standing on the edge of an oil pipeline right-of-way that exemplifies habitat fragmentation. This can limit species dispersal and foraging. Fragmentation impacts on biodiversity, the number and variety of species and a critical element for healthy forest and wetland communities. The transition from meadow to forests is a natural process called succession.

8 Observe the trails to the water through the undergrowth, on your left. It’s one of several. These are highways for deer, raccoons, porcupines, foxes, coyotes and other mammals, including beaver, woodchucks, muskrats, otters, chipmunks, three species of squirrels, and many small rodents.