

An Introductory Walk

For the first-time visitor to the Dundas Valley, this trail is an excellent place to begin. The Main Loop Trail is a journey through a mature deciduous forest, hemlock groves, stream valleys, the old apple orchard and open meadow. Hikers, cyclists and equestrians alike will enjoy this diverse trail.

Getting Started

From the Trail Centre, take the Main Loop Trail south across the Rail Trail and down the slope into the woods. A right turn will begin your discovery of the Dundas Valley!

Points of Interest

1 Sulphur Springs

The first point of interest is the historical Sulphur Springs fountain. As you near Sulphur Springs Road you may notice a hint of sulphur in the air. The Sulphur Springs fountain is located on the opposite side of the road. During the late 1800s, the Sulphur Springs Hotel with its mineral spa was a popular summertime destination. The sulphur waters were believed to have wondrous curative powers that attracted visitors from far and wide. The hotel closed in 1910 after two severe fires. The existing house “Deerspring”, was built on the ruins and is now privately owned.

2 The Hermitage

Ruins are all that remain of the Hermitage, a once magnificent stone mansion that was built in 1855 by George Gordon Browne Leith. The stones used in construction were quarried from local sites; the red bricks from the Dundas Valley and the limestone sills from the Credit River Valley. Look closely at the stones of the ruins, and you may be able to find fossils of sea creatures and plant life. The last resident of the Hermitage was Mrs. Alma Dick Lauder, daughter of the Leiths. In 1934 the Hermitage was destroyed by fire. Mrs. Lauder built a small house within the ruins and continued to live there until her death in 1942.

3 Gatehouse Museum

The Gatehouse, built around the same time as the Hermitage, was once known as “The Lodge”. It was originally the home of the gatekeeper and his family. The gatekeeper performed general duties and opened the gate for family and visitors to the Hermitage. Today, the building is the Gatehouse Museum, and houses the history of the Hermitage and the family who lived there. Behind the building, Ancaster Creek tumbles over the Hermitage Falls before winding its way through the valley. To make an appointment to visit the museum, please call 905-627-1233 or Fieldcote Museum at 905-648-8144.

4 Apple Orchard

The Merrick family planted this orchard more than 50 years ago. Many different types of apples could be found here, including Macintosh, Jonathan and Golden Delicious. Apple cider was once made in the cider shanty which still stands in the orchard. The area has now been left to regenerate naturally and is an ideal spot to watch for Eastern Bluebirds, Whitetailed Deer, Red-tailed Hawks, and Turkey Vultures.

5 Old Oak Tree

At the bottom of the apple orchard is the intersection of the Monarch and Main Loop Trails. Towering overhead is a White Oak tree approximately 150 years old. Two benches have been placed beneath this magnificent tree for visitors to relax and enjoy a quiet moment.

6 Hemlock Grove

As you make your way down the side of the valley towards the Hemlock grove, you may notice a series of terraces, each one reminiscent of an old stream bed. Hemlocks, with their short, flat needles, offer year round protection for small birds and animals such as Red Squirrels, Nuthatches, Chickadees & occasionally owls. Watch closely for the unusual tree which has been nicknamed “Watcher of the Woods”. This tree, an American Beech, with smooth, grey bark gets its nick-name from the unusual markings on the trunk which resemble eyes.

7 Dundas Valley Trail Centre

The heart of the valley and the focal point of the trail system, the Dundas Valley Trail Centre is a beautiful reproduction of a Victorian train station. The Trail Centre offers interpretive displays, snack bar, washrooms, and a picnic pavilion. It is open to the public on weekends and holidays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the winter & 8:00 a.m. - 5 p.m. in the summer; and weekdays from 8:00 a.m. - 3 p.m. in the both the winter & the summer. School programs are available year round. For further information about these activities, please call 905-627-1233.

7 The Giant’s Rib Discovery Centre

Since 2006, the Giant’s Rib Discovery Centre (GRDC) has been headquartered at the Trail Centre, initiating programming by distributing materials related to the Dundas Valley and other parts of the Niagara Escarpment to Valley visitors. GRDC is a not-for-profit organization created to tell the story of the Niagara Escarpment, and promote uses that will ensure retention of its natural state for future generations. The Centre offers public educational lectures and tours to interpret the Niagara Escarpment through geographical, geological, historical, agricultural, and cultural experiences. Regular monthly lectures are offered by experts on natural and cultural topics related to the Niagara Escarpment, and artists and photographers are invited to display environmental works on weekends throughout the year. The GRDC also issues a monthly newsletter to more than 350 Friends of the Giant’s Rib, operates a web-site and produces educational materials based on the Niagara Escarpment, suitable for use in Ontario schools. A resource library exists at the Trail Centre and a vast array of research materials are offered on the GRDC web-site, www.giantsrib.ca.

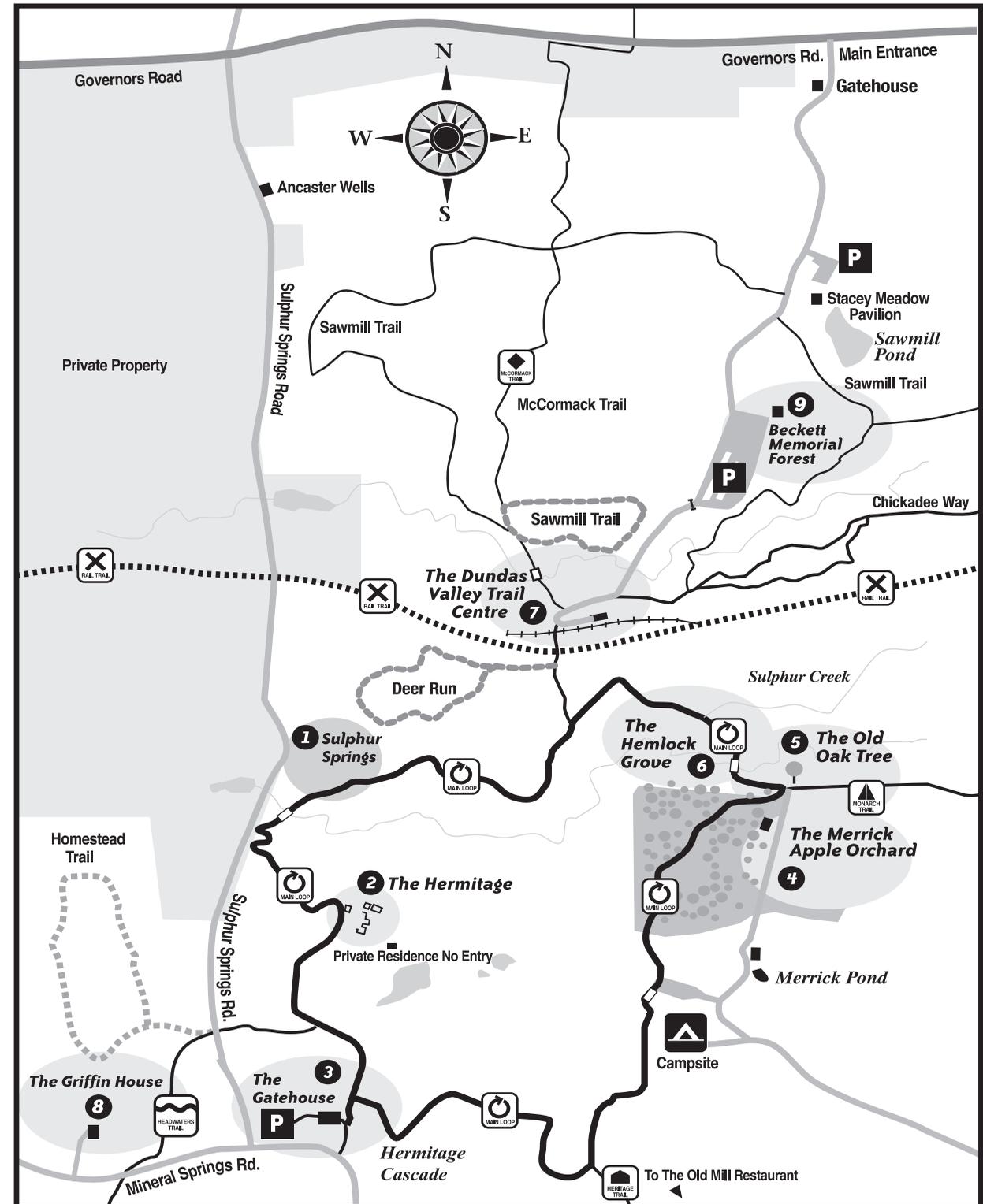
8 The Griffin House

An excellent example of Ancaster’s early history is preserved in a simple 1.5-storey house just west of the Hermitage Ruins. The Griffin House was the home of Eneals Griffin, his wife Priscilla, their children and descendants. Born into slavery in Virginia, Eneals Griffin escaped to freedom in Canada in 1828-29. In 1834, the Griffins purchased the house with 50 acres of land and for the next 150 years their descendants farmed here. Group tours and themed hikes are organized by the HCA and Fieldcote Museum. The Griffin House is located just off Mineral Springs Rd. **The Griffin House has been declared A National Historic Site.**

9 Thomas A. Beckett Living Forest

Each year, supporters of the Conservation Foundation Living Forest Fund are invited to help in the Thomas A. Beckett Forest. Many donors dedicate a tree to mark special achievements and to honour the lives of loved ones. Their donations have supported the maintenance of a trail and development of interpretive materials in the forest itself. The forest is named for Judge Thomas Beckett, a well-known conservationist and a founding member of HCA. Under his leadership, the HCA began a major lands acquisition program, which included lands in the Dundas Valley. The forest is located adjacent to the Governors Road parking area.

To find out more about making a donation, please call 905-525-2181 ext. 111.



Contact us

For more information about Dundas Valley call **905-627-1233** or Email: dvalley@conservationhamilton.ca

For the latest event listings, visit our website at: www.conservationhamilton.ca or call our information line at: **1-888-319-4722**

Hours of Operation

The Dundas Valley Conservation Area is open daily from 8:30 a.m. to sunset, unless otherwise posted.

The Trail Centre is open:

Summer Season: Weekdays 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Weekends: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Winter Season: Weekdays 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Weekends: 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

For Trail conditions, please call **905-627-1233**

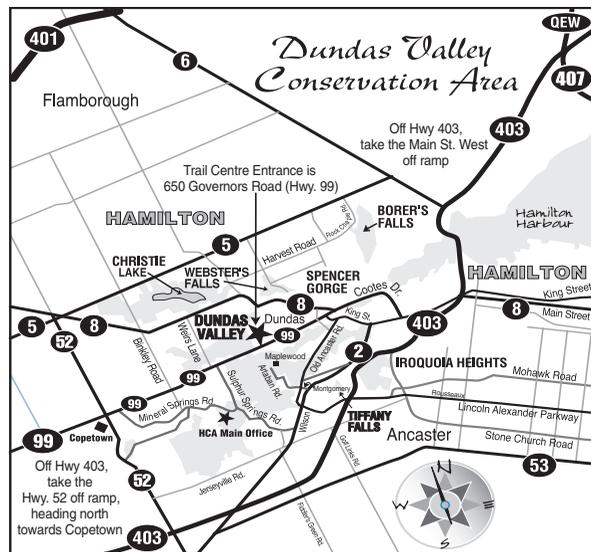
Admission

At each of the park's four parking lots there is an Honour Fee Station where users of the park can deposit the parking fee. Entry by foot or bicycle is free.

The entry fees gathered by the Dundas Valley are used to maintain the Conservation Area and its trail system.

Your HCA Nature's Rewards Membership Pass lets you enjoy unlimited membership entry for one full year to the Hamilton Conservation Areas. You and your passengers gain easy entry to our Conservation Areas, plus unique privileges and a list of valuable membership rewards. Call or visit us to learn more about how you can receive Nature's Rewards.

Buy your pass online: www.conservationhamilton.ca or by calling **905-525-2181**



Dundas Valley

Hamilton Conservation Authority

The Dundas Valley is one of southern Ontario's most spectacular natural treasures. Highlights of the 1,200-hectare conservation area include lush Carolinian forests, colourful meadows, cold-water streams, stunning geological formations and an array of rare plants, birds and wildlife.



The area is part of a large glacial valley that spreads out into Lake Ontario. It was excavated by a succession of glaciers that disappeared some 10,000 years ago. The landscape that emerged has been shaped by glacial melt water and, more recently, by streams flowing through the valley.

The rich natural environment existing here and along the Niagara Escarpment has been designated a World Biosphere Reserve by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The Main Loop Trail Map & Dundas Valley Trail System

A 40-kilometre trail system developed and maintained by the HCA and the world-famous Bruce Trail provides access to almost every part of the Dundas Valley. The HCA network is organized along three major trails: the Main Loop Trail (map included in this brochure), including several secondary trails branching from it; the Bruce Trail; plus Canada's first inter-urban rail trail - the 32-kilometre Hamilton-to-Brantford Rail Trail - which is one of the region's most important walking, cycling and equestrian routes (it's also part of the Trans Canada Trail). Links to Paris and Cambridge extend this latter trail by 80 kilometres.



Trail Centre

The Trail Centre is the focal point for the valley trail system. Modelled after a Victorian railway station, it provides important visitor services, including:

- ◆ Snack bar and washrooms
- ◆ Trail maps
- ◆ Interpretive displays and brochures
- ◆ Facility rentals
- ◆ School and youth programs
- ◆ Wedding photography permits



Share the Path

The Dundas Valley Trail system is open to hikers, dog-walkers, joggers, cyclists, equestrians and cross-country skiers. Pay stations for parking are conveniently located at major parking areas.

Observing these general rules of etiquette will help ensure a great trail experience for everyone.

- ◆ Stay on the main trails. There are many rare and sensitive plants and small animals that are easily damaged or hurt if you leave the trails.
- ◆ Keep to the right and allow other users to pass to your left.
- ◆ Let others know you're there - sound your bell or call out before passing.
- ◆ Please pack out what you carry in.
- ◆ All dogs must be leashed.

Note: Because of rugged terrain, Dundas Valley trails have limited accessibility. Wheelchair and scooter users are encouraged to use the Rail Trail.

You can buy a waterproof topographical Dundas Valley Adventure map at the Trail Centre and HCA Main Office. Designed for cyclists, hikers, and equestrians, it's the first to provide complete and accurate detail of the spectacular Dundas Valley.

Film Locations

Hamilton Conservation Authority has been providing the U.S. and Canadian Film Industry with the perfect location, for a number of years. With such a diverse range of locations, we meet filming requirements for television series, movies, commercials, music videos, documentaries and photography. We offer everything from waterfalls, lakes, a water park, deep forests, meadows, a heritage village and the Hermitage historic ruins, shown below.

Check our website at www.conservationhamilton.ca Call Sandi Richardson at **905 525 2181 ext. 147** or send an email to Sandi.Richardson@conservationhamilton.ca



Environmental Education

The Dundas Valley Conservation Area offers more than 30 exciting outdoor environmental education adventures for students in Grades 1-12. Weekend programs are also available for special interest groups.

For information, programs & fees please contact the Education Co-ordinator at 905-627-1233 or

Email: bethdvca@conservationhamilton.ca
Fax: 905-627-9722



Ask how you can get your Rewards!



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Your HCA Nature's Rewards Membership Pass lets you enjoy unlimited membership entry for one full year to the Hamilton Conservation Areas.

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Call or visit us to learn more about how you can receive Nature's Rewards.

Prices subject to change without notice.