Welcome

Crawford Lake Trail
The Crawford Lake Conservation Area is a natural environment park that is managed by Conservation Halton. The 468 hectare park includes unique geological features, extensive forests, a rare meromictic lake and a 15th century reconstructed Iroquoian village. The conservation area has significant natural habitat with a wide diversity of flora and fauna and approximately 19 km of nature trails.

Geology & the Niagara Escarpment
Crawford Lake is located on the Niagara Escarpment, Southern Ontario’s most significant landform which winds 725 km from Queenston to the islands off the Bruce Peninsula. In Ontario, the Niagara Escarpment has more than 100 sites of geological significance including some of the best exposures of rocks and fossils of the Paleozoic Era (255-570 million years ago), to be found anywhere in the world. Many interesting geological features occur at or near the Crawford Lake Conservation Area. A large island of bedrock (Milton Outlier) that was separated from the main escarpment includes well known landmarks such as Rattlesnake Point, Rehto Heights and the Nassagaweya Canyon.

Crawford Lake, A Time Capsule of Natural and Cultural History
Crawford Lake is a rare meromictic lake that contains information about the natural and cultural history of the area. Located atop the Niagara Escarpment, this small deep body of water has limited circulation and little oxygen below 15 metres (total depth of 24 metres). This ensures the preservation of annual deposits of sediment called varves. Similar to counting growth rings on a tree, these doubled layered bands can be accurately dated. Studies of the sediment led to the discovery of the nearby Iroquoian village.

Life on the Limestone Landscape
The extensive forests and escarpment cliffs at Crawford Lake provide habitat for a wide diversity of flora and fauna. The shallow calcium rich soil and rocky outcrops sustain many unique plants (eg., the maidenhair spleenwort and walking fern). The lake’s scenic woods and wetlands. Participants in a self-guided “Moccasin Walk” can enjoy the inspirational signs posted along the way.

Support Conservation!
Visit the Crawford Lake Gift Shop! Visit our unique gift shop and take home a reminder of your visit to Crawford Lake.

Crawford Lake Trails
Crawford Lake has approximately 19 km of colour coded trails consisting of a series of overlapping loops and a connecting trail to the Rattlesnake Point Conservation Area. Interpretive stations are located on the boardwalk surrounding Crawford Lake and at the Niagara Escarpment Lookout.

Crawford Lake Trail
1.4 km (30 minutes)
This elevated boardwalk around Crawford Lake surrounds the environmentally sensitive shoreline and forest. The boardwalk offers several interpretive stations explaining the formation of the lake and its colourful natural and human history.

Woodland Trail
3.6 km (1 hour 30 minutes)
This natural earthen trail takes you through rolling woodlands, pine plantations and open meadows. A wide panoramic view of surrounding escarpment lands can be seen from atop a massive glacial ridge. This trail is a loop that begins and ends on the Woodland Trail.

Nassagaweya Trail
7.2 km (approximately 2 hours one way)
This natural earthen trail crosses the Nassagaweya Canyon and follows the escarpment brow to the Rattlesnake Point Conservation Area where several excellent lookouts are located. About 4.5 hours is required to complete a return trip on this trail.

Snowshoe Trail
3.4 km (1 hour 30 minutes)
This trail has been designed with snowshoers in mind. Enjoy the beauty of winter as you wind your way through field and forest.

Bruce Trail’s Main Route
725 km
This well known Ontario hiking trail follows the Niagara Escarpment from Georgian Bay to the Niagara River. It passes through Crawford Lake Conservation Area where the main trail is marked by white painted blazes on trees and secondary access trails are blazed in blue.
Step Back In Time – Village Guide

This 15th century Iroquoian Village was reconstructed on its original site to create a unique opportunity to expand our understanding and appreciation of Ontario’s First Peoples. Three sources of information were used in reconstructing the village:

1. Archaeological research determined the exact location of various structures such as longhouse posts and fire pits.
2. Written records from the Jesuit missions and early explorers provided some details on the above ground features such as the longhouses, palisade walls, and other village structures.
3. Aspects of the traditional Iroquoian lifestyle have been shared with us through oral traditions and cultural practices of the First Nations communities and Elders still honouring these traditions today.

To help you explore and enjoy the village, we encourage you to read the Silent Waters information signs located throughout the village.

Three Sisters’ Garden

All Iroquoian people were traditionally farmers who grew three main crops, corn, beans, and squash, known to the people as the Three Sisters. These crops were planted and cultivated in extensive fields surrounding the village. Tobacco and sunflowers may have been grown within the village.

The Palisade

Archaeological excavations revealed no evidence of a palisade wall at the Crawford Lake site. However, many other excavated villages of this time period were enclosed with a palisade like the one built here to secure the village today. The lookout platforms provided a vantage point from which to “keep an eye” on the activities in the fields, the village, and the surrounding woodlands.

The Turtle Clan Longhouse

This is the smallest of the longhouses that were uncovered at the site during the archaeological excavations. A longhouse of this size would likely be home to 30-40 family/clan members. Other longhouses discovered here would have been home to larger family groups/clans up to approximately 100 people. The Turtle clan longhouse is designed to provide visitors with a hands-on experience of what it would be like to live in a longhouse 500 years ago.

The Wolf Clan Longhouse

The Wolf Clan Longhouse is a modern day learning facility that is designed to help visitors learn more about Iroquoian culture, and archaeology through the use of exhibits, displays, and video presentations.

Visit these other Conservation Halton parks for more great natural experiences:

Mountsberg – (905) 854-2276
Raptor Centre, maple syrup demonstration, wildlife, biking and hiking

Mount Nemo – (905) 336-1158
Cliff edge trails, scenic lookouts, cliffside caves, hiking

Kelso/Glen Eden – (905) 878-5011
Sandy beach, boat rentals, hiking and biking, downhill skiing, snowmobiling, group camping

Highland Conservation Area – (905) 878-5011
Hiking, cycling, and cross country skiing

Hilton Falls – (905) 854-0282
Hiking, biking and cross country skiing

Rattlesnake Point – (905) 878-1147
Scenic cliff hiking, fishing, rock climbing, group camping

Hours of Operation:

- Open all year! 7 days a week (limited facilities on weekdays from April – Nov.)
- Hours of Operation: 10 am to 4 pm (unless otherwise posted/ specified)