



Headwater Hikes

Fletcher Creek Ecological Preserve Puslinch

Fletcher constitutes a headwater area in what appears to be a dry cedar forest, at least for the first half of the Hike. Normally found in swamps, cedars love to have their feet wet. At Fletcher, groundwater from local wetlands flows through the natural fissures in the underlying limestone, allowing the cedar to thrive on what appears to be dry ground.

After the bridge at the half-way point, where the photo over-leaf was taken, the vegetation changes to mixed conifers and hardwoods. Before and downstream of the pond at the end of the Hike, shown below, it changes again.



The quarry itself features interpretive signs and a boardwalk along one edge where it has filled with water. It also demonstrates both the impact of even the small-scale extraction of needed aggregate resources across the Greenbelt and some of the restoration challenges once those operations close. At Fletcher, minerals leeching from the limestone present water chemistry challenges to the re-establishment of a health aquatic community.



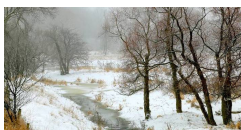
Headwater Hikes is an OHI project sponsored by The Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation

Local Partners:

- ◆ Environment Hamilton
- ◆ Hamilton Conservation Authority



Possibility grows here.



OHI Headwater Hikes—FLETCHER CREEK

Location

Concession Rd 7, Puslinch, Ontario, N0B 2J0

Map Search

Fletcher Creek Ecological Preserve

Watershed

Sulphur Creek sub-watershed, Spencer Creek. See <http://www.conservationhamilton.ca>.

Hike Type and Length

A multi-use 3m road, too rough for wheelchairs, to a rehabilitated quarry, with a few short side-trails. Headwater Hike suggested below is around 90 minutes.

Rating

Extremely easy, but a bridge, the boardwalk, and side-trails may be slippery so footwear with a good tread is recommended.

MAP AND DIRECTIONS



1. The first section of trail is dominated by a dry cedar forest, but look north where there are breaks in the trees to see how much wetland and water supports this ecosystem.
2. Just before the bridge in the middle of Fletcher, the vegetation changes from cedar to a mixed forest. Take a moment to contrast the stream above and below the bridge. The photo below shows the downstream reach.
3. Hear the echoes of back-breaking labour to harvest limestone for buildings and other uses. Visit the lookout and read the interpretive signs on restoration efforts. Follow the boardwalk and see how the plant and fish species are slowly transitioning the quarry to natural uses.
4. Explore the wetland east of the quarry, formed by both natural ground-flow and water over-topping the quarry, before heading back to the parking area.



Please read the Safety Guidelines and Disclaimers at
www.ontarioheadwaters.ca/Hikes/Safety.

Contact: Andrew@ontarioheadwaters.ca 416 231 9484



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