

Headwater Hikes

Terra Cotta Conservation Area Terra Cotta

Terra Cotta is extraordinarily photogenic, forms part of the UNESCO Niagara Escarpment World Biosphere Reserve, and offers forests, wetlands, and meadows. An unusual combination of diverse local features has led to Terra Cotta as being identified as one of ten “Nodal Parks” within the Niagara Escarpment’s Parks and Open Space System.

In the spring, TC has large forest swathes in blooming trillium, while turtles often dig nests for their eggs right on the trails. In the summer, its forests teem with salamander and offer cool respite from the heat. Come early in the fall, due to Terra Cotta’s elevation, to see the glorious colours. In the winter, you can either cross-country ski or skate on a natural pond.

Terra Cotta has four main wetland areas, each with an interesting history of human intervention. The restored wetland is the re-naturalized site of a concrete swimming pool and, before that, was probably a wetland. Mink, Muskrat, and Spring are natural ponds that were expanded. However, as the sun was heating Spring Pond, the upper half was “decommissioned”, as can be



seen in the photo overleaf, and has reverted from a wide, shallow pond to a narrow channel, significantly lowering water temperature in the pond.

A similarly-motivated restoration was implemented for Wolf Lake, another artificial feature whose shallow water was subject to solar heating. Here, a by-pass channel was constructed to let the cool water from Spring and Muskrat flow directly downstream rather than in to Wolf.

Both efforts described above are important innovations, protecting the cold-water fishery of the Credit while increasing habitat for aquatic species, amphibians, and birds. Terra Cotta has a lot of bird species.

Please check the link in Location for seasonal entry times and gate fees.

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

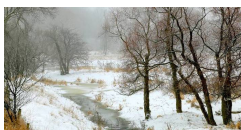


Possibility grows here.



Local Partners:

- ◆ **CONE Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment**
- ◆ **Credit Valley Conservation**



OHI Headwater Hikes—TERRA COTTA

Location

14452 Winston Churchill Boulevard, Terra Cotta, Ontario, N0B 1N0

Map Search

Terra Cotta Conservation Area

Watershed

Silver Creek Sub-watershed, Credit River. See <http://www.creditvalleyca.ca/>.

Hike Type and Length

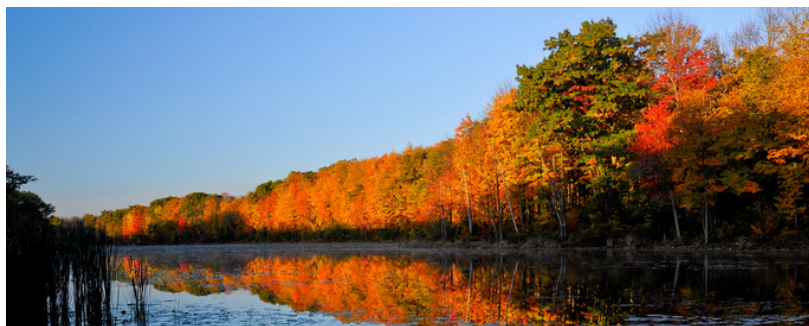
Multi-use, 3-metre wide granular trail suitable for wheelchairs but is undulating and may be rough. Some single-track trails and connection to Bruce Trail. Suggested Hike about 90 minutes.

Rating

Easy trail, but footwear with a good tread recommended, especially for other single-track trails .

MAP AND DIRECTIONS

1. Take the Wetland Trail from the parking lot to the restored wetland. Follow the trail around the pond or view it from the boardwalk, as shown lower left.
2. Choose your own path around Mink and Muskrat ponds up to the Spring Pond.
3. Bear right onto Spring Pond Trail, an undulating trail through majestic trees, as per the photo on the previous page, with good views of Spring Pond.
4. Bear right on to Terra Cotta Lane.
5. This spur leads to the Bruce Trail and a single, unserviced Bruce Trail campsite.
6. Returning to Terra Cotta Lane, turn right and follow the trail along the south side of Wolf Lake.
7. Make sure you take in the by-pass channel around this end of Wolf Lake. It runs from the small peninsula north of the lakehead through a major swale on the south side of the trail, now becoming filled with recent plantings. When done, make your way back to the parking lot, or break out the food and linger at one of Terra Cotta's many picnic tables.



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

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