

CONSERVATION HALTON
PROTECTING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT FROM LAKE TO ESCARPMENT

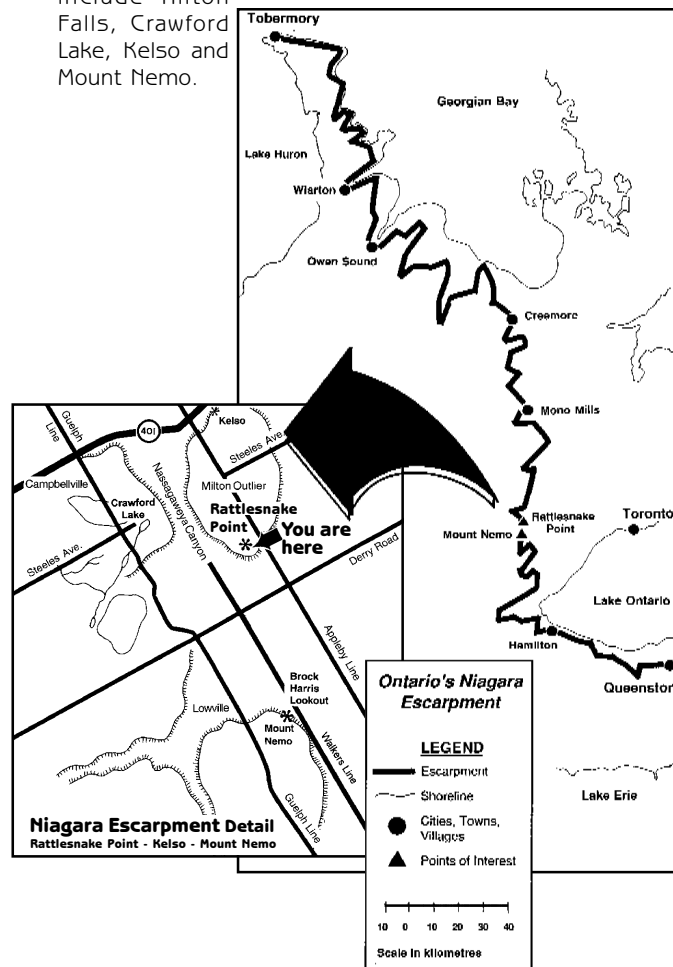
Welcome to Rattlesnake Point

The Rattlesnake Point Conservation Area is a natural environment park that is protected and managed by Conservation Halton. The 727 acre park includes unique geological features such as sheer cliffs, crevice caves, talus slopes and glacial deposits. The conservation area has abundant plants and wildlife and the trail system has five lookouts that provide spectacular views of the local countryside.

A Masterpiece Carved in Limestone

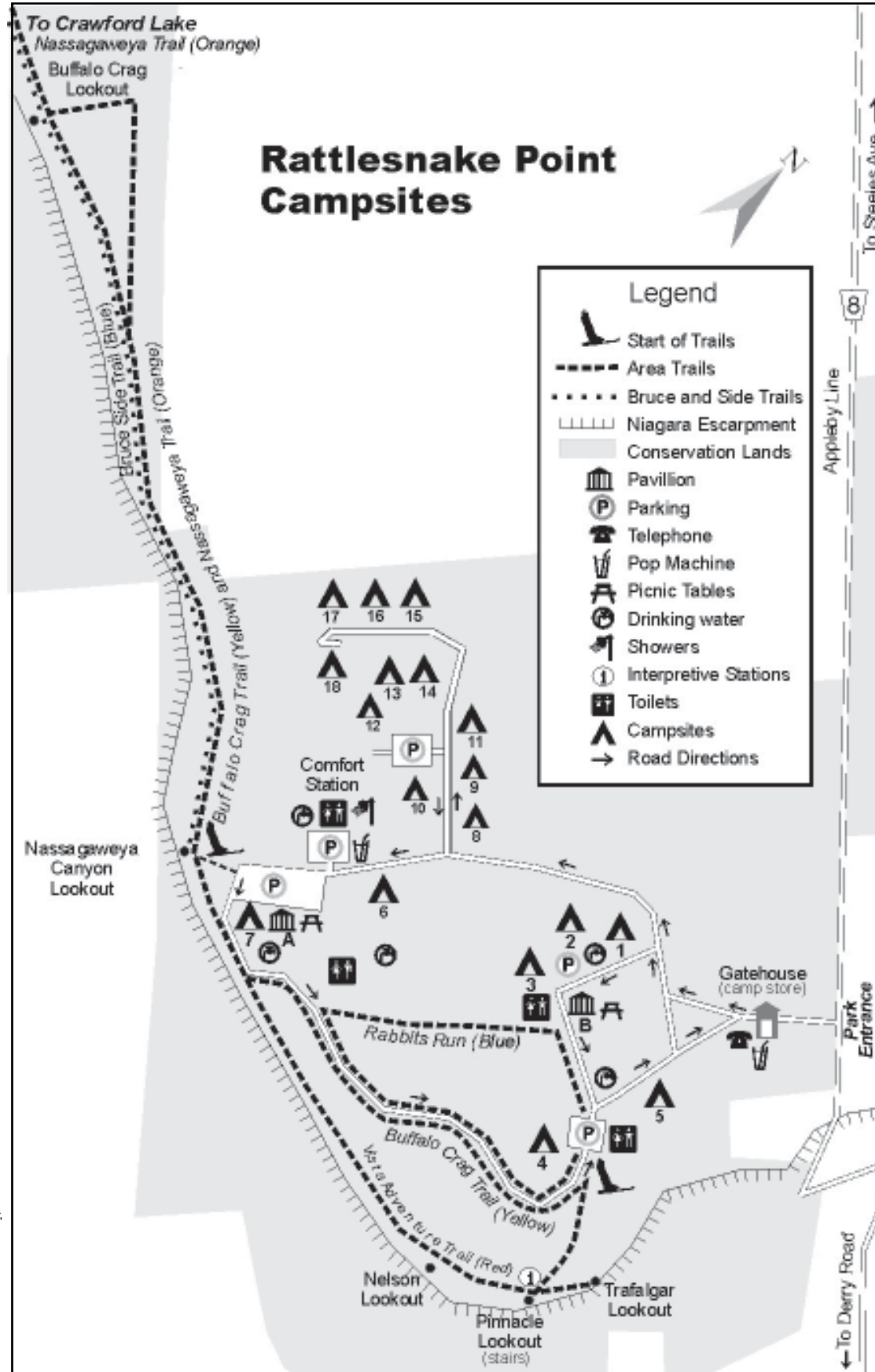
The limestone cliffs of Rattlesnake Point are part of Ontario's Niagara Escarpment. This well-known landform winds 725 km from Queenston near Niagara Falls to the islands off Tobermory at the tip of the Bruce Peninsula. The escarpment was formed over 400 million years ago when a vast tropical sea covered much of North America. The erosive power of preglacial rivers and glacial meltwaters sculpted this geological masterpiece. Rattlesnake Point is located on an isolated rock outlier separated from the escarpment and overlooking the Lowville Valley.

There are more than 100 parks along the Niagara Escarpment that protect its significant natural and cultural features. Most of the parks are linked by the Bruce Trail, Ontario's longest footpath. Other escarpment parks located near Rattlesnake Point include Hilton Falls, Crawford Lake, Kelso and Mount Nemo.



Rattlesnake Point Trails

Rattlesnake Point has 12.7 km of colour coded trails consisting of four loops ranging from 1-7.2 km that begin at the start of trails near the upper parking area.



Rabbits Run Trail 1 km
BLUE This short trail begins on the main park road that winds through a forested area and then loops back past a group campsite back to the start of trails.

Vista Adventure Trail 1.5 km
RED This trail begins on a forest path that leads to the edge of the escarpment where the Pinnacle Lookout and staircase are located. The trail includes the Trafalgar and Nelson lookouts where great views of Mount Nemo and Lake Ontario can be seen. The trail returns to the starting point by way of the Rabbits Run Trail.

Buffalo Crag Trail 3 km
YELLOW This trail begins off the west end of the lower parking area. The wooded trail then follows the edge of the escarpment past the Massagaweya Canyon and Buffalo Crag Lookouts where there are excellent views of the valley between Rattlesnake Point and Crawford Lake.

Massagaweya Canyon Trail 7.2 km To Crawford Lake Conservation Area (Not a loop - 14.4 km round trip)
ORANGE This natural earthen trail crosses the Massagaweya Canyon and leads to the Crawford Lake Conservation Area that has a reconstructed Iroquoian Village. About 4 or 5 hours is required to complete a return trip on this trail.

When hiking at Rattlesnake Point, please respect the following rules which are in place to ensure the integrity of this area.

Trail Regulations

- Group and family supervised camping is available by permit only.
- Control your pets. Pets must be kept on a maximum 2 metre lead.
- No alcohol allowed.
- No bicycles or motorized vehicles on the trails.
- "Pack out" everything you take in. There are 7 large waste bins located throughout the park and camping areas.
- Please stay on the marked trails.
- Aspire to invisibility. Observe but do not disturb. Leave exciting discoveries for the next person to experience and enjoy.

Thank you.



Warning: The cliffs of the Niagara Escarpment can be hazardous and quite slippery when wet. Please be careful when hiking the trails at Rattlesnake Point.
Do not venture too close to the cliffs or climb over the lookout walls.

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Conservation Halton is a community based environmental agency that protects local ecosystems and contributes to the quality of life in communities throughout its area of jurisdiction known as the watershed. The Rattlesnake Point Conservation Area is part of more than 9000 acres of conservation lands that are being protected and are available for recreational and educational experiences.

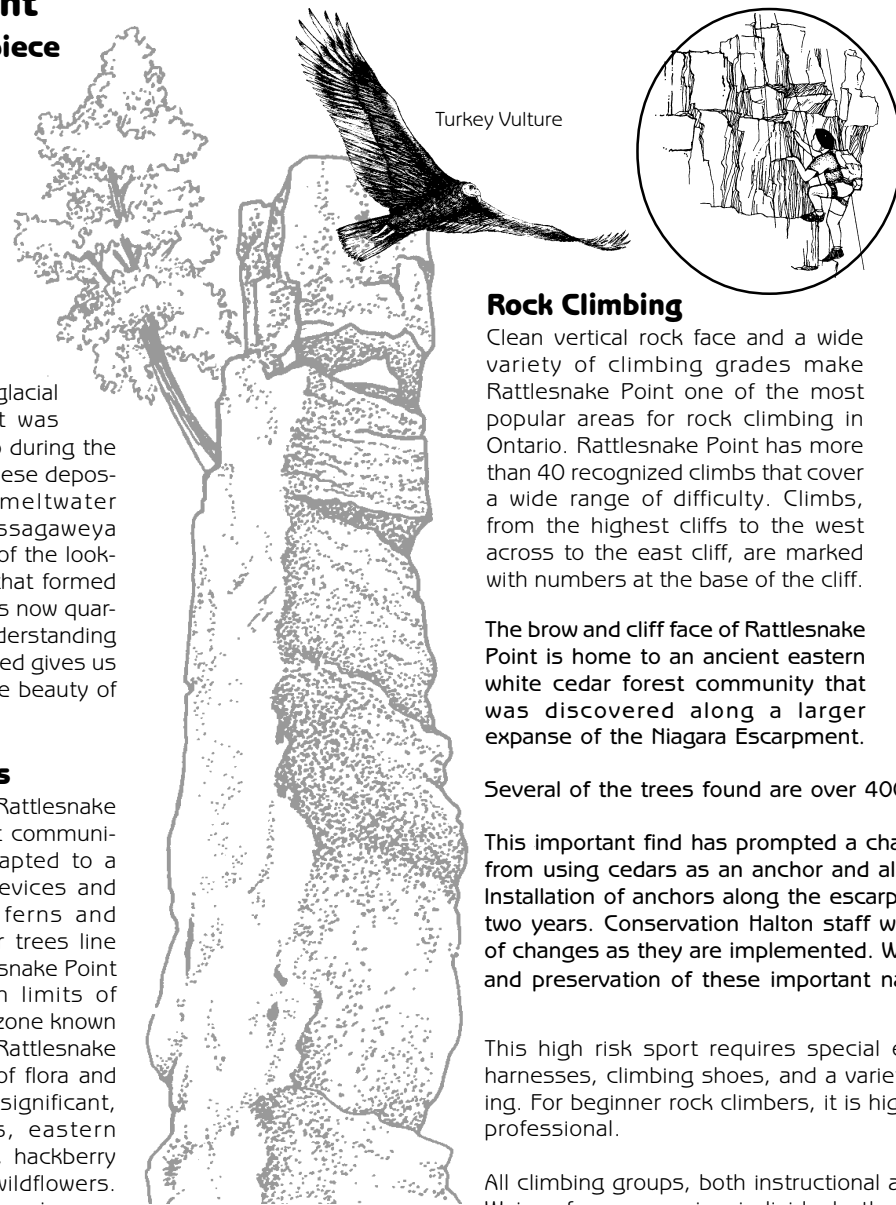
Conservation Halton

Rattlesnake Point A Limestone Masterpiece

From Rattlesnake Point you can see the cliffs of Mount Nemo to the south. The area between here and Mount Nemo is the entrance to the Lowville Valley which is drained by Bronte Creek. This bedrock valley is 5 km wide and extends 8 km towards Kilbride. The valley entrance is surrounded by glacial outwash till or gravel that was deposited 12,000 years ago during the retreat of the last glacier. These deposits are associated with meltwater channels such as the Massagaweya Canyon located to the right of the look-outs. A large outwash fan that formed at the mouth of the canyon is now quarried for sand and gravel. Understanding how this landscape was formed gives us a greater appreciation of the beauty of Rattlesnake Point.

Life Among the Rocks

The escarpment habitat at Rattlesnake Point includes unusual plant communities that are especially adapted to a rugged landscape. The crevices and fissures have numerous ferns and mosses while ancient cedar trees line the edge of the cliffs. Rattlesnake Point is located at the northern limits of Canada's richest vegetation zone known as the Carolinian Life Zone. Rattlesnake Point has over 30 species of flora and fauna that are considered significant, including turkey vultures, eastern pipistrelle bats, spice bush, hackberry trees and many kinds of wildflowers. Deer, fox, raccoon and porcupine are also common in the park.



Turkey Vulture

Rock Climbing

Clean vertical rock face and a wide variety of climbing grades make Rattlesnake Point one of the most popular areas for rock climbing in Ontario. Rattlesnake Point has more than 40 recognized climbs that cover a wide range of difficulty. Climbs, from the highest cliffs to the west across to the east cliff, are marked with numbers at the base of the cliff.

The brow and cliff face of Rattlesnake Point is home to an ancient eastern white cedar forest community that was discovered along a larger expanse of the Niagara Escarpment.

Several of the trees found are over 400 years old, and at least three trees are over 500 years.

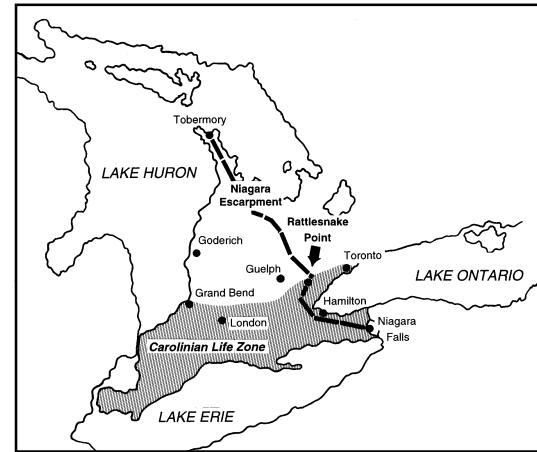
This important find has prompted a change to our rock climbing policy. Climbers are prohibited from using cedars as an anchor and all other trees must be wrapped to protect the tree bark. Installation of anchors along the escarpment brow is to begin in 2003 and continue for at least two years. Conservation Halton staff will endeavour to keep the climbing community informed of changes as they are implemented. We thank you for your co-operation and continued support and preservation of these important natural areas.

This high risk sport requires special equipment and training. Rock climbers need helmets, harnesses, climbing shoes, and a variety of ropes and protection devices to ensure safe climbing. For beginner rock climbers, it is highly recommended that lessons be taken from a certified professional.

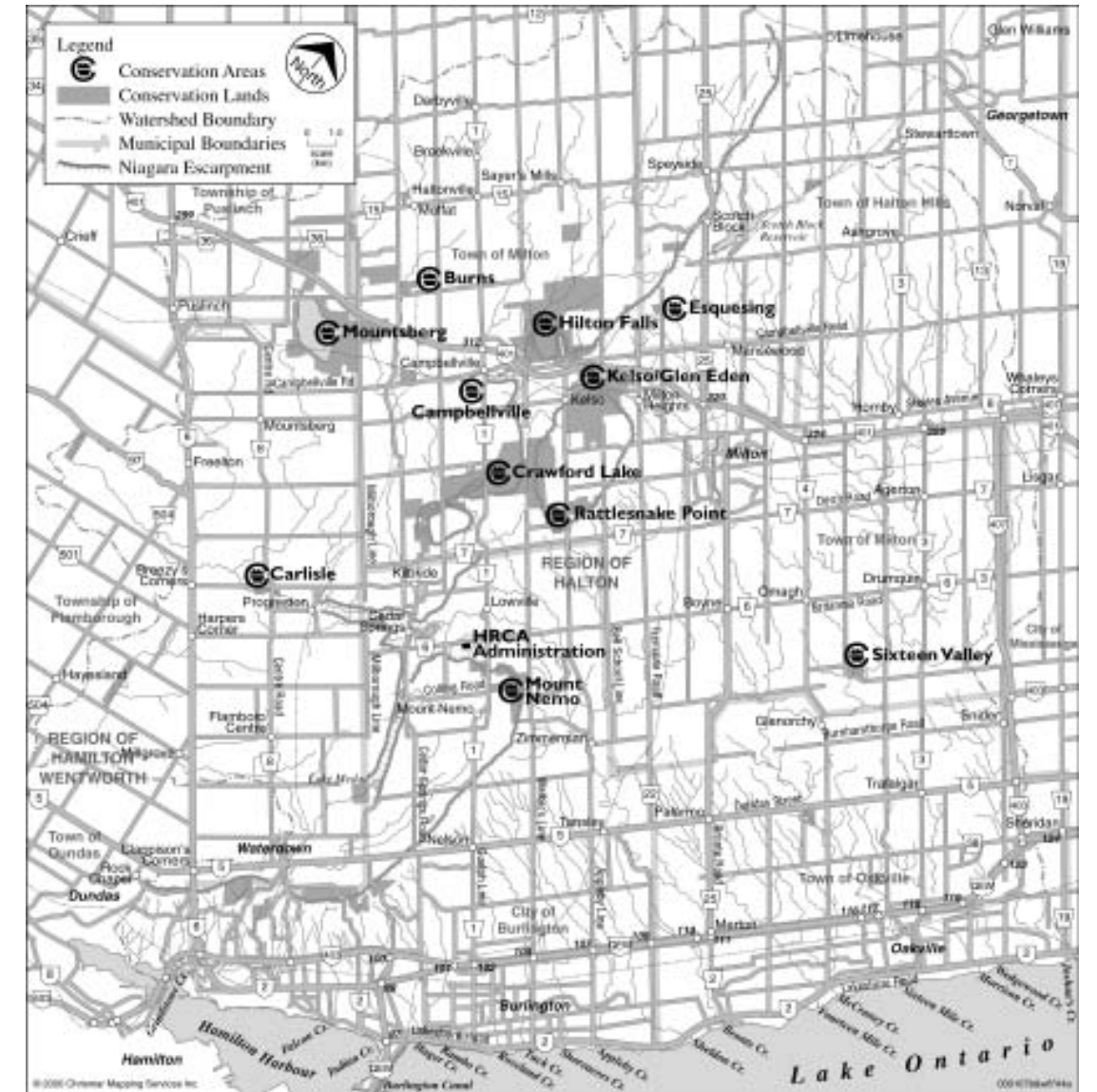
All climbing groups, both instructional and recreational, must obtain a permit prior to an outing. Waiver forms, warning individuals that rock climbing can be dangerous and is done at the climber's own risk, must also be signed by all instructional groups, and submitted to Conservation Halton prior to climbing.

Carolinian Life Zone

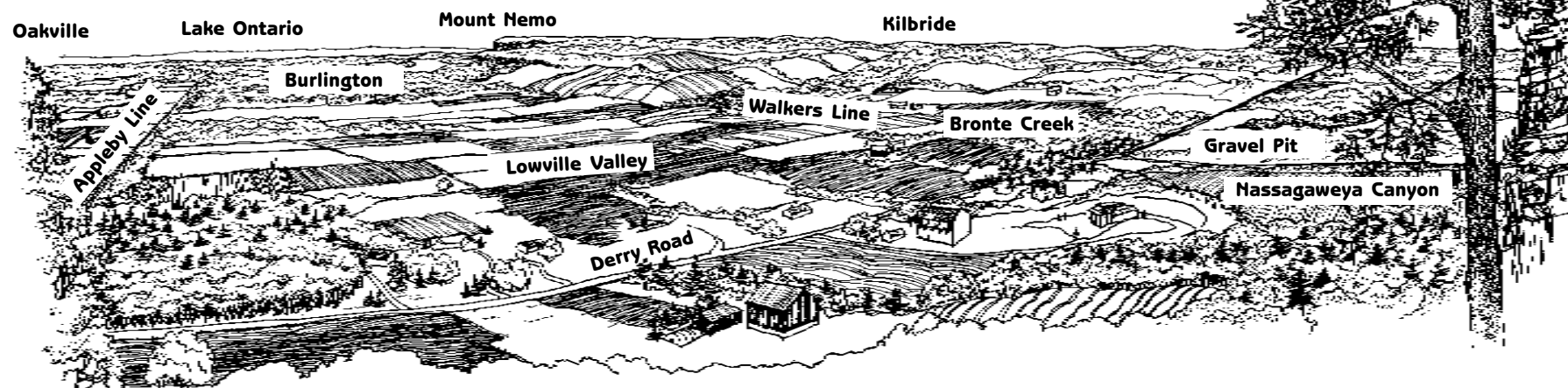
The Carolinian Life Zone is an ecological community nestled among Lakes Erie, Huron and Ontario. The northern limit of the zone generally follows a line between Grand Bend and Toronto. The area includes some of the most significant habitats and threatened plant and animal species that can be found in Canada. Rattlesnake Point is located at the northern limit of the Carolinian Life Zone and on Ontario's Niagara Escarpment.



Visit these other Conservation Halton parks



From Rattlesnake Point look for these landmarks



Visit these other Conservation Halton parks for more great natural experiences

Mountsberg (905) 854-2276

Raptor Centre, maple syrup demonstration, wildlife, biking and hiking, cross country skiing.

Mount Nemo (905) 854-0262

Hiking, scenic viewing, Bruce Trail, interpretive lookout

Hilton Falls (905) 854-0262

Hiking, biking and cross-country skiing, Bruce Trail, waterfall

Crawford Lake (905) 854-0234

Reconstructed Iroquoian village, visitors centre, rare lake with boardwalk, hiking trails, Niagara Escarpment Lookout

Kelso/Glen Eden (905) 878-5011

Sandy beach, boat rentals, hiking and biking, down hill skiing, snowboarding, group camping, fishing

