Meadowlily Woods Environmentally Significant Area (ESA) is situated on the south side of the South Thames River. The ESA contains floodplain woods, deep ravines, mature woodlands and some active and retired agricultural fields that are now meadows.

Along the Thames west of Meadowlily Road is the Meadowlily Nature Preserve, owned by the Thames Talbot Land Trust. The public is allowed to hike the trail through the preserve.

History

London is located in the traditional territory of the Attawandaron, Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, and Lunaapeewak peoples. Over 60 archaeological sites are documented in the Meadowlily area, especially on the Ingersoll Moraine. The sites span the entire 11,000 years of prehistory and include everything from aboriginal camps to villages.

In the early part of the 19th century, private homes for commissioned officers were built along the east end of Commissioners Road. One such house was built in 1848 on Park Farm. The Fraser family purchased Park Farm in 1908. Portions of the property were farmed, but the wooded areas were protected by Harrison Fraser until his death in 1982, at which time the City of London obtained the Park Farm estate.

Plant Communities & Restoration

The site has a mix of wetland and upland forest species. In the bottomland along the river, Basswood, Hackberry, willow and dogwood dominate, while cattails and marsh plants grow in and near the water. In summer, colourful wildflowers can be found including Blue Flag (iris), Turtlehead and Great Lobelia.

The upland areas are dominated by Sugar Maple, American Beech, Black Cherry and Red Oak. In the spring, the woods are carpeted with a variety of flowers, including trilliums, trout lilies, hepatica, Bloodroot, violets and Spring Beauty. The cool, north-facing ravines are home to Eastern Hemlock and Yellow Birch, and over a dozen fern species. Skunk Cabbage grows in the wet seepage areas.

Wildlife

Over 110 species of migratory and breeding birds have been observed in the Meadowlily Woods area. Due to its large size and location along the river, the forest supports forest interior and area sensitive species such as Pileated Woodpecker and Ovenbird. Other nesting species include Red-tailed Hawk, Great Horned Owl, Belted Kingfisher, Rose-breasted Grosbeak and American Goldfinch.

The animal life is typical of the London area with Raccoon, Coyote, Red Fox, Whitetailed Deer, Grey Squirrel and Beaver.

The many wet habitats are home Green, Wood and Leopard Frogs, Spring Peepers, Eastern Redback Salamander and Midland Painted Turtle.

The meadows provide nectar-producing flowers for butterflies and moths. Giant and Tiger Swallowtails, Clouded Sulphur and Spring Azure are among the species recorded in the area.

For More Information

For more information on London’s ESAs, contact:
Upper Thames River Conservation Authority
519-451-2800 ext 281, www.thamesriver.on.ca
City of London, City Planning
519-661-4980, www.london.ca

Please stay on the marked trails on City property to protect yourself and your pets, and to protect wildlife habitats from disturbance.
Rules to remember in London's ESAs

- Please use the official access points indicated on the trail maps.
- Stay on the managed trails (marked with yellow markers on trees or posts).
- Bicycles are permitted only on multi-use pathways.
- Access is allowed from 6 am to 10 pm.
- Keep the ESAs litter free.
- All pets must be on leash (2 m/6 ft maximum).
- Do not feed the fish and wildlife.
- Releasing or dumping fish or wildlife of any kind is prohibited.
- Fishing is permitted with a provincial fishing licence. No hunting is permitted.
- See additional rules on signs at ESA entrances.