



East Pond Bridge and Lookout

The Coves ESA

The Coves ESA is centred on a former oxbow of the Thames River. An oxbow is a U-shaped body of water that forms when a river's meander is cut off, creating an isolated pond or marsh. This former meander is now three separate ponds, as parts of the old channel have filled with sediment. The ESA also contains marshes, ravines, woodlands, and meadows.

Hiking Trails and Access Points

The map (see reverse) shows the access points and almost 5 km of trails on gently sloping terrain.

The trails in the north, in Greenway Park, connect to the Thames Valley Trail (white blazes) and the Thames Valley Parkway, London's primary multi-use pathway system. The managed trails are identified by yellow trail markers on trees or posts.

Please stay on the marked trails on City property to protect yourself and your pets, and to protect wildlife habitats from disturbance.

History

London is located in the traditional territory of the Attawandaron, Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, and Lunaapeewak peoples.

A member of a 1793 excursion led by Lt. Gov. John Graves Simcoe was the first to write about this former meander of the Thames River.

For most of the 1800s, two pioneer farm families owned the land around the oxbow. The ponds were a popular destination for picnics, fishing, hunting, boating, ice skating, hockey, curling and tobogganing. During the 1920s and 1930s, ice was cut from the Coves, stored in nearby barns and distributed to homes in the summer to keep food cool in ice boxes.



Ice skating, January 1964
Photo: London Free Press

The land has seen many uses, including manicured estates, a federal shooting range, a paint factory, and an apple orchard. Euston Meadow was once an aggregate pit where local youth practiced target shooting. After annexation in 1960, the pit became a landfill site that was capped in 1972, creating a hill that provides a viewpoint over the surrounding residential areas.

The Friends of the Coves Subwatershed Inc. (FOTCSI) formed in 2000. This group's efforts greatly enhance the stewardship of this unique urban ESA. FOTCSI secured grant funding to implement many of the trails, boardwalks, and ecological restoration work recommended in the 2014 Conservation Master Plan for the Coves ESA.

Plant Communities and Restoration

Much of the Coves ESA forms a narrow band along the ponds and ravines. The ESA is home to a wide range of habitat types and plant communities, including meadow marshes and wet deciduous forests next to the ponds, and drier mixed forests on higher ground.

Some of the iconic tree species that can be found include Sycamore and Hackberry near the water's edge and Chinquapin Oak and Hemlock on steeper, drier ground. Many areas in the Coves, including Euston Meadow, Elmwood Gateway, and

East Pond, have been restored to remove invasive shrubs, including buckthorn, and replanted with native species to enhance the ESA's ecological integrity.

More areas will be restored in the future, in cooperation with local Adopt-an-ESA groups including the FOTCSI.

Wildlife

More than 100 animal species have been recorded in the Coves ESA. Near the pond edges, there are many species of dragonflies and damselflies as well as Green Frogs and Bullfrogs. The 16 fish species found in the ponds include Large-mouth Bass, Pumpkinseed, and Black Crappie. Midland Painted Turtles can sometimes be seen basking on logs.

Fifty-nine bird species breed in the Coves ESA, from common urban birds such as Black-capped Chickadee and Northern Cardinal, to forest species such as Great-crested Flycatcher, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Look for Belted Kingfishers and Great Blue Herons in the wetlands.



Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Photo: Brenda Gallagher

For More Information

For more information on London's ESAs, contact:
Upper Thames River Conservation Authority
519-451-2800, info@thamesriver.on.ca,
www.thamesriver.on.ca

City of London, Planning and Development Services

519-661-4980, www.london.ca

Friends of the Coves Subwatershed Inc.

519-640-5397, www.thecoves.ca

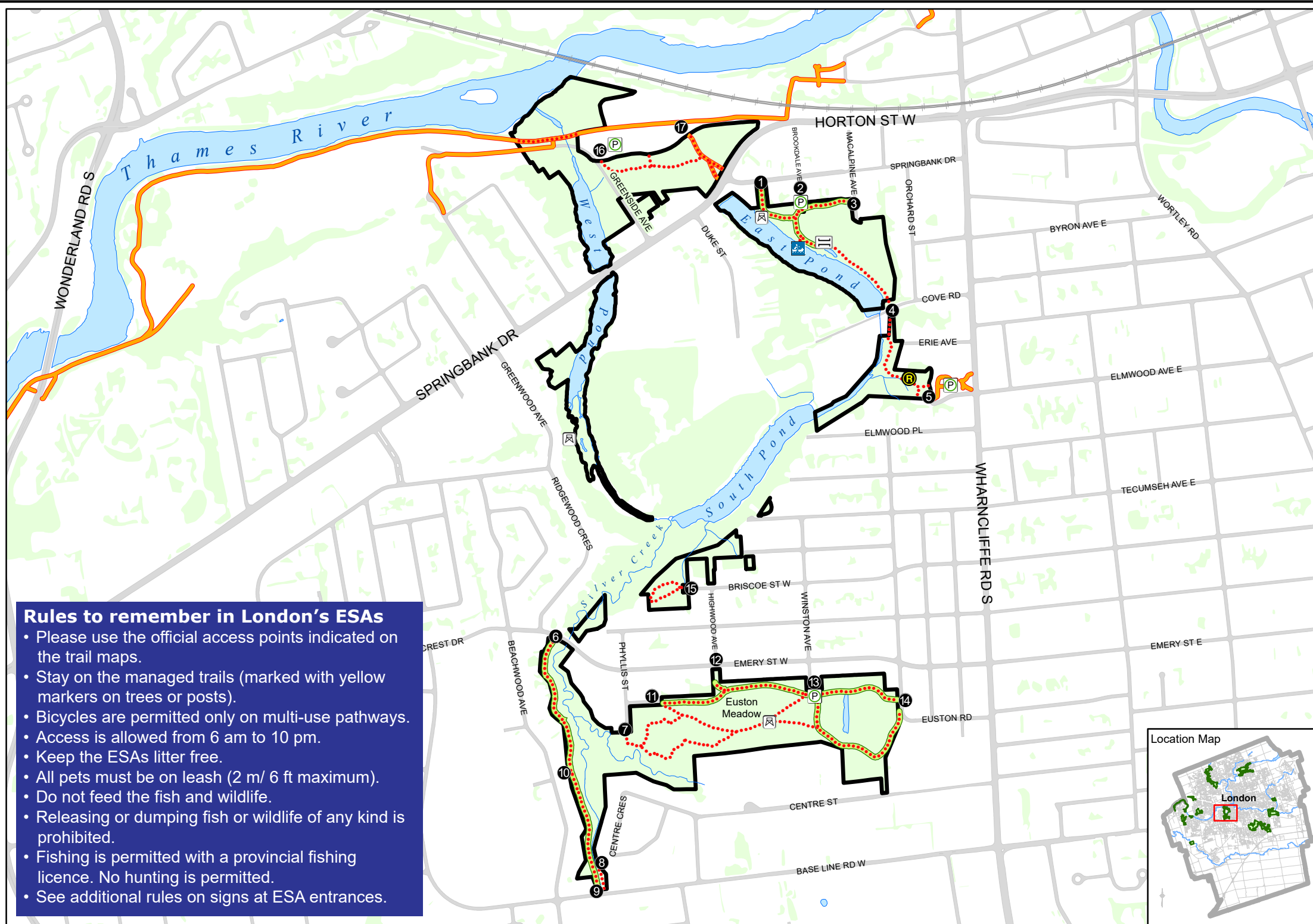
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The Coves

Environmentally Significant Area



The Coves Environmentally Significant Area (ESA) is located near the core of the City of London, west of Wharncliffe Road, between the Thames River and Baseline Road West. The publicly-owned portion of the ESA covers more than 47 hectares.



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.

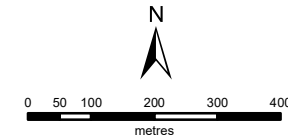
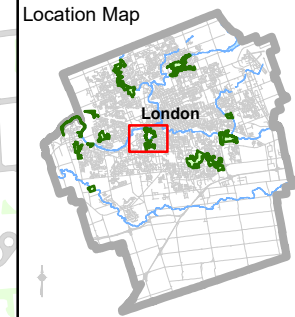
The Coves
Environmentally Significant Area

Legend

Access Points

- 1 Springbank Drive
- 2 Brookdale Avenue
- 3 MacAlpine Avenue
- 4 Cove Road
- 5 Elmwood Avenue
- 6 Southcrest Drive
- 7 Phyllis Street
- 8 Centre Crescent
- 9 Baseline Road West
- 10 Beachwood Avenue
- 11 Rachel Street
- 12 Emery Street
- 13 Winston Avenue
- 14 Mackay Avenue
- 15 Briscoe Street West
- 16 Greenside Avenue
- 17 Thames Valley Parkway

- Parking
- Bridge
- Canoe Access
- Lookout/Viewpoint
- Railing
- Managed Trail (4.93 km)
- Multi-use Trail
- Accessible Trail
- Public ESA Boundary (47.4 ha)
- Water
- Vegetation



UPPER THAMES RIVER
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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