



Trails

The ESA has three main access points with kiosks (see map on reverse) and 11 km of managed trails. Most of the trails are gently rolling, with the occasional short, steep hill. Almost all the trails are on clay or muck soils, which are very prone to becoming muddy. Boardwalks cross some lowland areas.

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.

Kettle Pond Formation

The kettle ponds were created when large blocks of ice were left behind by the retreating glaciers 13,000 years ago, creating permanent depressions that filled with water.

History

London is located in the traditional territory of the Attawandaron, Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, and Lunaapeewak peoples. Archaeological digs uncovered artifacts from First Nations campsites that date back 4500 years.

European farmers first settled the area along Commissioners Road in 1810. The railway track that cuts across the ESA was constructed in 1915 as part of a line from London to Port Stanley.

In the 1940s, several veterans' residences and other facilities were built north of Saunders Pond, as part of Westminster Hospital. In the 1960s, part of the area was used as a sanitary landfill site.

In the 1970s, the City of London and the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority purchased approximately 200 hectares for the purpose of establishing an urban conservation area. More land has been acquired since then, including land donated by London Health Sciences Centre and St. Joseph's Health Care, London, in 2004.

Plant Communities and Restoration

The five large kettle ponds and a beaver pond (Thompson Pond) are surrounded by lowland and upland habitats. Approximately 60% of all plant species found in Middlesex County can be found in this ESA.

Bordering Spettigue Pond is a very narrow, sensitive band of bog habitat, an uncommon feature in southwestern Ontario. Tamarack and Leatherleaf are among the species growing from a thick mat of peat. Nearby and in other areas of swamp forest, Red Maple, Yellow Birch, and Silver Maple dominate. The cool, shady conditions support a mixture of northern and southern plants.

The drier slopes and ridges around the ponds support typical eastern hardwood forest species. Sugar Maple, American Beech, Basswood, and Red Oak are present, as are southerly species such as Shagbark Hickory. Various wildflower species bloom in the spring, including Wild Geranium and Canada Mayflower.

Invasive species management and ecological restoration, funded by the City and enhanced by Adopt An ESA groups and volunteers, protects the ecological integrity of the ESA.

Wildlife

The ESA is an important stopover for migrant birds, with almost all the warblers, flycatchers, and finches in the London area being reported, as well as ducks, grebes, herons, and other water-birds.

Summer residents include forest birds such as Great Crested Flycatcher and Wood Thrush. The



Great Horned Owl
Photo: B. Gallagher

meadows (former landfill) support species such as Field Sparrow and Eastern Meadowlark. Great Horned Owl and Red-tailed Hawk also nest in the ESA.

Mammals common to

urban areas may be seen in the ESA. Beaver, Coyote, and White-tailed Deer are relatively recent arrivals.

In wet areas, you may hear or see several frog and toad species. Turtles and snakes bask in open areas or on fallen logs. Several species of fish have been recorded in the ponds, although not in great numbers. Also watch for insects such as dragonflies, damselflies, and butterflies.



Bullfrog
Photo: D. Wake

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

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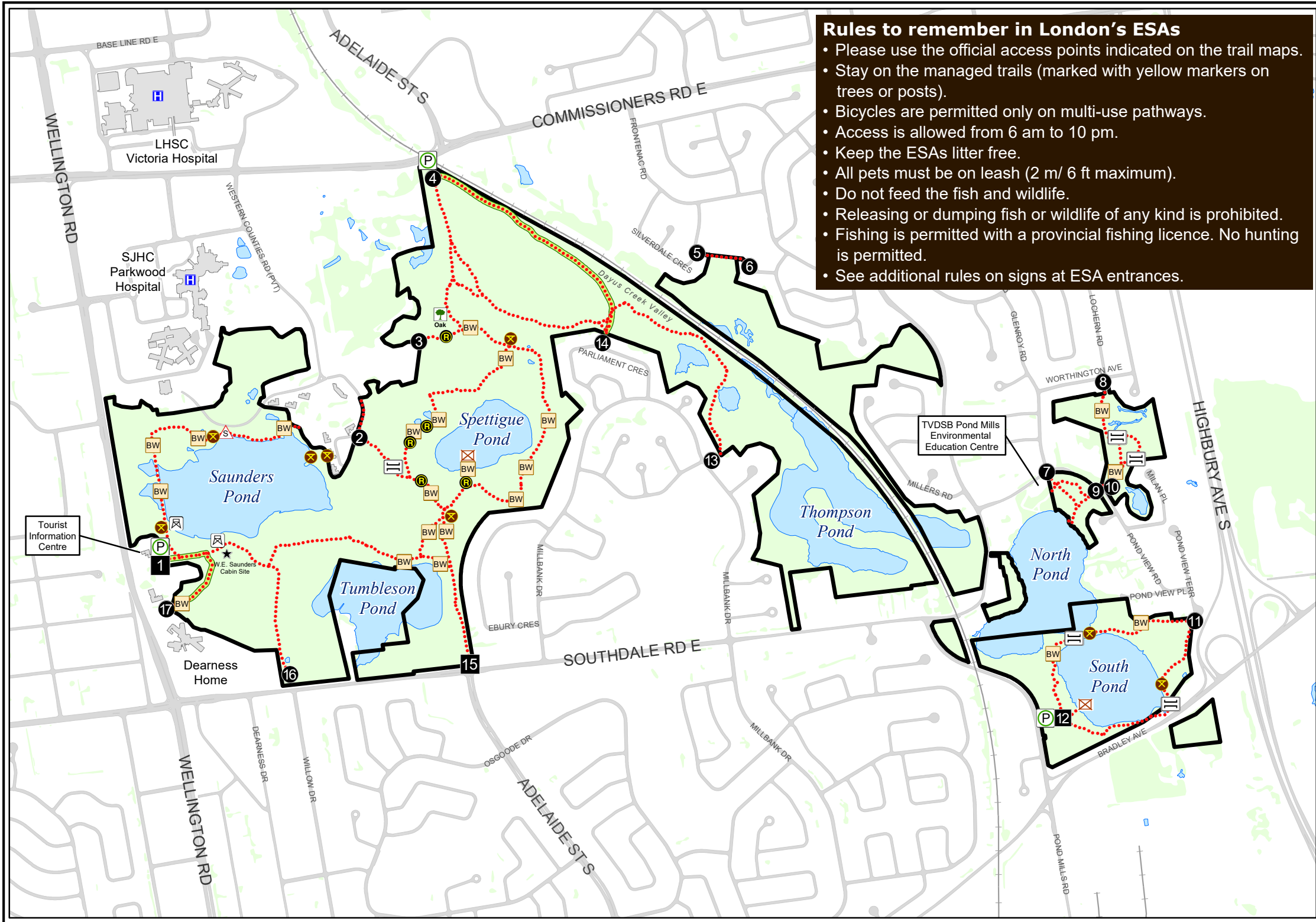
Westminster Ponds/Pond Mills

Environmentally Significant Area



Westminster Ponds / Pond Mills Environmentally Significant Area (ESA)

is located south of Commissioners Road and east of Wellington Road, adjacent to the Tourist Information Centre, and extends eastward to Pond Mills Road. At approximately 200 hectares, this property is the largest publicly-owned ESA in London.



- ### 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.

Westminster Ponds/ Pond Mills Environmentally Significant Area

- #### Legend
- Access Points**
- 1 Wellington Road Tourist Info Centre (Kiosk)
 - 2 South Parkwood Hospital
 - 3 North Parkwood Hospital
 - 4 Commissioners Road at Adelaide Street
 - 5 Silverdale Crescent
 - 6 Agincourt Place
 - 7 Pond View Road - Education Centre
 - 8 Worthington Avenue
 - 9 Pond View Road South
 - 10 Pond View Road North
 - 11 Pond View Terrace
 - 12 Pond Mills Road at Bradley Avenue (Kiosk)
 - 13 Millbank Drive
 - 14 Parliament Crescent
 - 15 Southdale at Adelaide Street (Kiosk)
 - 16 Deerness
 - 17 Wellington Road South
- Other Features:**
- P Parking
 - X Bench
 - BW Boardwalk
 - Bridge
 - Floating Dock
 - Heritage Tree
 - R Railing
 - S Staircase
 - Viewing Platform
 - Managed Trail (11 km)
 - Accessible Trail
 - Railway Tracks
 - Public ESA Boundary (200 ha)
 - Water
 - Vegetation

