

Devil's Creek Trail

Trail Heads

Bismark Drive (East of St. Augustines School)
Blair Road at Morva Rouse Park

Length

1.7km

Parking

Blair Rd.
On street parking

Surface

Stonedust and some asphalt

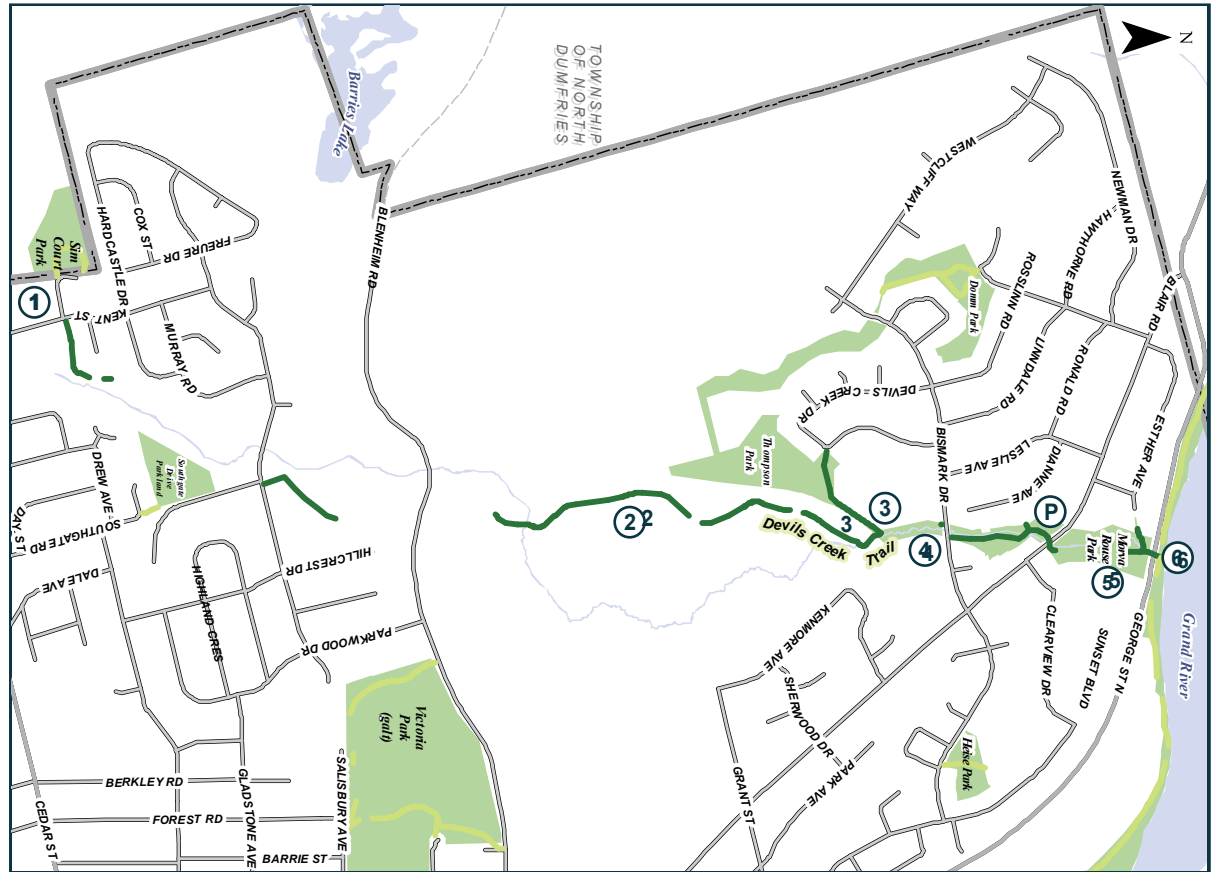
Washroom

No washroom facilities provided

GPS

Bismark Drive (East of St. Augustines School)
N43.370648, W80.334668

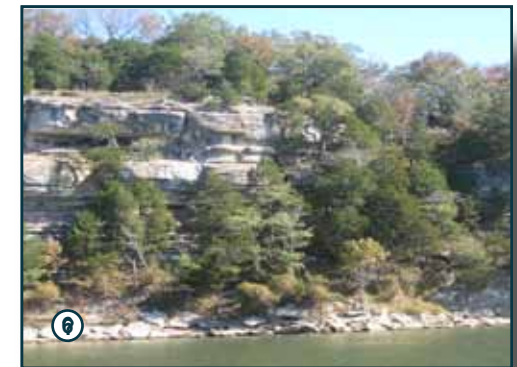
Blair Road at Morva Rouse Park
N43.373134, W80.334397



Grandview Pond



Cattle Crossing / Boardwalk



Limestone Cliffs



Devil's Creek Trail

Portions of the Devil's Creek Trail pass through environmentally sensitive areas designated as both a Regional Environmentally Sensitive Policy Area (ESPA) and Provincially Significant Wetland (PSW) containing more than 30 rare plant species and located on the edge of a Carolinian Forest. This section of trail was originally created in 1996 with the construction of a sewer line using micro-tunnelling. After construction of the sewer, a road was created to allow the contractor access to the property for maintenance and replacement of vegetation. Although a multi-use trail was not part of the original plan, it was recommended and passed by City Council in 1998 and it now forms an integral part of the Cambridge Trail network connecting residents to the Grand Trunk Trail.

① DEVIL'S CREEK

The Devil's Creek itself originates at Cedar Street near Kent Street and flows for 2.8 kilometers before plunging 12 meters down dolomitic cliffs (cliffs made up of shells and skeletons of marine animals and chemicals that precipitated out of a warm, shallow sea) and into the Grand River. The creek supports a cold-water aquatic environment which depends on clear, cold groundwater and is a rare feature in an urban environment. Overhanging trees cool the water and keep oxygen levels high as cold water can hold more oxygen than warm water. The presence of Brook trout which cannot live in warm or low oxygen level water is evidence of the healthy cold-water stream status.

② WHY THIS WETLAND IS IMPORTANT

Wetlands are the cleaning workhorses of the watershed and maintain its environmental health. Wetlands play a crucial role in providing a steady supply of clean water. Their plants and soils absorb water from rainstorms and snow melt, helping to reduce flooding. The soils then slowly release the water to recharge streams and groundwater reserves. While water is in the temporary reservoir, aquatic plants filter excess nutrients and pollution particles out of the water that would otherwise flow downstream or seep into the groundwater. Just as the world's rainforests are the key to fresh oxygen, wetlands are the key to fresh water.

AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

③ GRANDVIEW POND

This pond is a depression filled with standing water supplied from surface runoff, ground seepage and cold-water springs. The pond temporarily stores water, releasing it slowly to replenish groundwater and to help keep Devil's Creek flowing all year. Water flowing over urban surfaces picks up small sediments and pollution particles such as silt, fertilizers, oils etc. These sediments settle to the bottom of ponds, thus improving the water quality. Aquatic plants also help clean the water by absorbing pollutants into their plant tissue.

④ THE CATTLE CROSSING/BOARDWALK

The land around this area was once used for grazing cattle. Livestock however can have detrimental effects on wetland habitats as cattle can trample young vegetation and manure can impact the water quality. The old cattle crossing under the railway is no longer used for agriculture but now boasts a boardwalk.

This boardwalk was built in the winter when the ground was frozen. It was built one section at a time and all construction was done from a previously built section so as not to disturb this sensitive environment.

⑤ MORVA ROUSE PARK

In 1971, this park was named after the wife of Gordon Stanley Rouse who was Mayor of Galt. This park was once manicured lawns next to a barren, eroding and straightened stream. To prevent further degradation, an effort was begun to repair the riparian zone (the strip of land running beside a stream). The planting of trees, shrubs and grasses along the edge of a stream has a number of benefits: prevents particles from washing into the stream thereby improving water quality; creates habitat for birds and wildlife; provides shade to cool the waters; and, allows roots to stabilize the banks from erosion.

⑥ LIMESTONE BLUFFS

Devil's Creek flows over a 12 meter high limestone cliff and plunges into the Grand River at its junction with the Grand Trunk Trail. This area also provides spectacular vistas of the Grand River valley and the Galt Golf and Country Club. These bluffs are the remnants of an ancient reef created millions of years ago when southwestern Ontario was periodically covered by warm tropical waters. The Grand Trunk Trail forms part of the Trans Canada Trail which links communities across this vast country with the world's longest network of recreational trails.