

Conservation Area

*trail and
facility
guide*



Warning: The cliffs of the Niagara Escarpment can be hazardous and quite slippery when wet. Please be careful when hiking the trails at Mount Nemo. Do not venture too close to the cliff 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 Mount Nemo Conservation Area is part of more than 9000 acres of conservation lands that are being protected and are available for recreational and educational experiences.

Welcome

..... to Mount Nemo

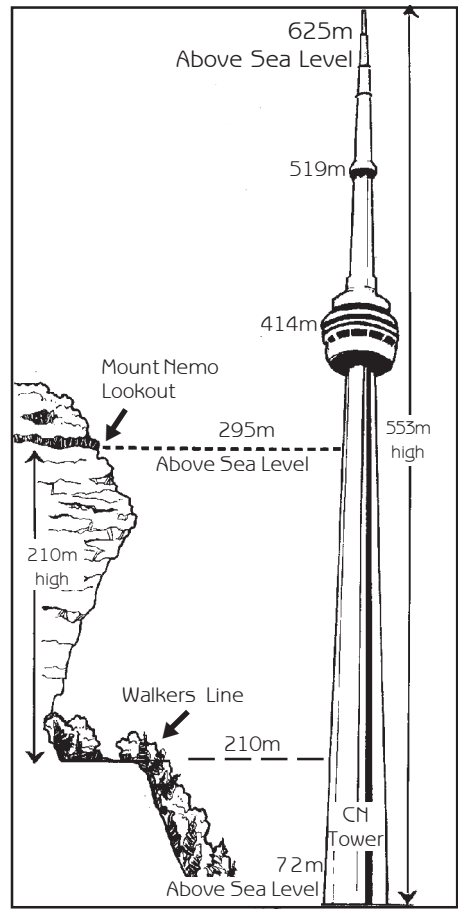
Mount Nemo Conservation Area is a natural environment park that is protected and managed by Conservation Halton. The park includes unique geological features and one of the best examples of a cliff edge ecosystem in Ontario.

When you explore the natural beauty of Mount Nemo, you will see rare ferns, poison ivy, chipmunks, warblers, soaring turkey vultures and ancient cedars, a few of the many species that are indigenous to the area.

A Rocky Ridge of the Niagara Escarpment

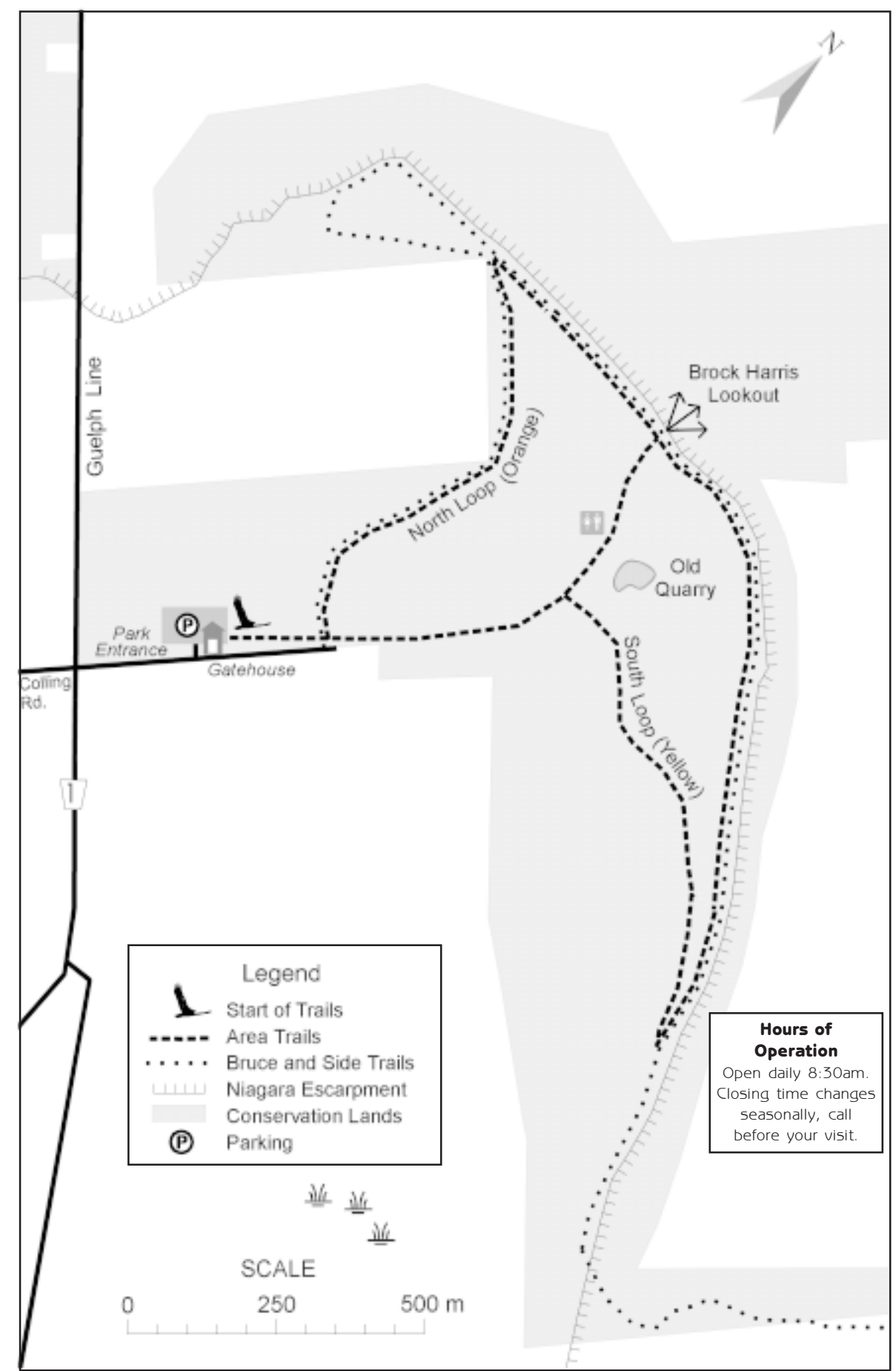
The limestone cliff at Mount Nemo, with its crevice caves, rock fissures and talus slopes, is a well-known landmark in Halton.

As part of the Niagara Escarpment, Mount Nemo was formed 450 million years ago along the shore of the shallow tropical sea that covered a vast area of Ontario and Michigan. Skeletons of primitive sea creatures and debris from ancient mountains were compressed into massive layers of reef and sedimentary rock. These ancient coral reefs formed a layer of amabel dolostone to create the cap of the cliff at Mount Nemo. Beneath this layer are soft, easily eroded shales. Over succeeding millions of years, erosion, glaciers, ancient rivers and lakes, and the elements, shaped the escarpment into its distinctive craggy cliffs and rugged slopes that can be seen today. At Mount Nemo, the escarpment height varies from 30 metres at the north end to 10 metres at the south end.



Mount Nemo Trails

Mount Nemo has 4.9 km of colour coded trails consisting of two overlapping loops. The trails join at the Brock Harris Lookout where several interpretive signs and resting benches are located.



Note: Trail distances are measured from the start of trails located near the gatehouse and parking area.

North Loop Trail 2.3 km (one hour)

ORANGE This trail follows the old quarry road to the Brock Harris Lookout before turning north through the forest along the edge of the escarpment cliffs.

From the Brock Harris Lookout, 295 metres (968 feet) above sea level, 50 kilometres (31 miles) of countryside come into view. The communities of Milton, Brampton and Toronto, and the Nassagaweya Canyon and Rattlesnake Point are spread out across the horizon. On a clear day, you can even spot Toronto's CN Tower.

From the gnarled, eastern white cedars on the cliff edge to the escarpment forest below, the trail follows the escarpment rim, with spectacular lookouts along the way. The pathway passes crevice caves, rock fissures and talus slopes. Moss-covered boulders with ferns and small trees growing from cracks soften the rugged landscape. The trail returns on the old quarry road back to the start of trails.

South Loop Trail 2.6 km (one hour and 10 minutes)

YELLOW This trail follows the old quarry road to the Brock Harris Lookout where spectacular views of the countryside can be seen. Look for turkey vultures gliding in the thermal updrafts near the cliffs.

Standing at a higher vantage point offers a unique perspective to see the birds flying in the valley below. From the Lookout, the trail turns south on an earthen path that follows the edge of the escarpment cliff. Over millions of years, erosion, glaciers, ancient rivers and the elements shaped the escarpment into distinctive craggy cliffs and rugged slopes. The return on the south loop turns away from the limestone bluffs, and continues through open meadows, a narrow forest corridor and a former quarry site. The trail comes back to the quarry road that returns to the start of trails.

Bruce Trail 725 km

This well-known Ontario hiking trail follows the Niagara Escarpment from Georgian Bay to the Niagara River. It passes through Mount Nemo Conservation Area where the main trail is marked by white blazes painted on trees.

Please help protect this sensitive area by following our trail regulations.

Trail Regulations

- No camping or overnight parking.
- Pets must be kept on a maximum 2 metre lead.
- No alcohol or fires allowed.
- No bicycles or motorized vehicles on the trails.
- You should "pack out" everything you take.
- There is a large waste bin in the parking area.
- Please stay on the marked trails.

Thank you.

Mount Nemo Cliff Ecosystem and Ancient Forest

The cliff edge and face of the Niagara Escarpment is likely the oldest, most intact and undisturbed forest ecosystem in eastern Northern America. Eastern white cedar trees form a sparse canopy over lichens, mosses, ferns, fungi and other plants that make up the understory. The oldest individual cedar trees may be over 1,000 years old but are stunted in growth because of the harsh climate of the cliff face. The cliff ecosystem at Mount Nemo has four distinct habitats including the cliff top forest, cliff edge, cliff face and the escarpment base forest. The rich environment of these habitats support a diverse range of plant and animal species.

The Brock Harris Lookout

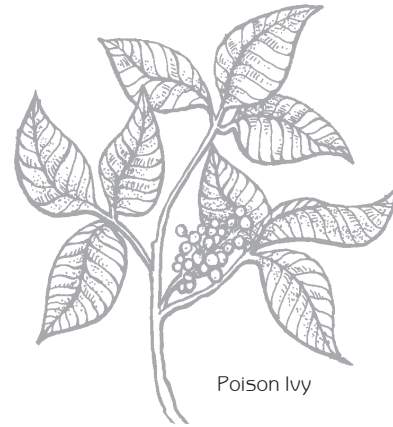
From the Brock Harris Lookout atop the Niagara Escarpment at Mount Nemo, you can view the surrounding countryside for more than 50 km. It is one of the premier viewing areas on the escarpment in Halton. From this vantage point, the escarpment winds to the west and north where you can see Rattlesnake Point and the Nassagaweya Valley near Crawford Lake. Walkers Line, just below the lookout, runs north and south through the rural landscape of the Halton watershed. This gradually changes towards the east where increasing urbanization emphasizes the importance of the Niagara Escarpment.



Turkey Vulture

Plants and Animals

The natural vegetation at Mount Nemo reflects a transition between the Great Lakes – St. Lawrence Forest Region and the Deciduous Forest Region of Southern Ontario. Species common to both regions are found in areas with a micro-climate suited to more northern or southern species. Plant communities of the Great Lakes – St. Lawrence Region species include sugar maple, maple/red oak and poplar/maple birch. Trees common to the Deciduous Forest Region include ironwood, black walnut, hickory and witch hazel. Basswood/butternut (more southern species) are found in warmer southern and western exposures as well as cedar/birch on the northern escarpment exposure.



Poison Ivy

Several areas are in early and advanced stages of secondary succession. Significant species include Hart's tongue fern, sweet chestnut, rock sandwort, purple clematis, climbing fumitory and golden corydalis.

The fauna at the Mount Nemo area reflects the diversity of habitats which occur at the site. A wide range of small mammals, some large mammals and a variety of birds migrate through or reside at Mount Nemo year-round.

Reptiles and Amphibians

American toad, northern leopard frog, green frog, garter snake, green small snake.

Birds

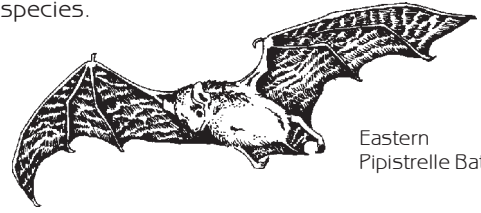
Turkey vulture, black-capped chickadee, Canada warbler, scarlet tanager, rose-breasted grosbeak.

Mammals

Small footed bat, big brown bat, red squirrel, chipmunk, white tailed deer.

Caves and Critters

The caves at Mount Nemo are important for bat nesting and hibernation. Four bat species are known to be present. Disturbance of the caves will affect bat species.



Eastern Pipistrelle Bat

Rock Climbing - Top Rope Ban

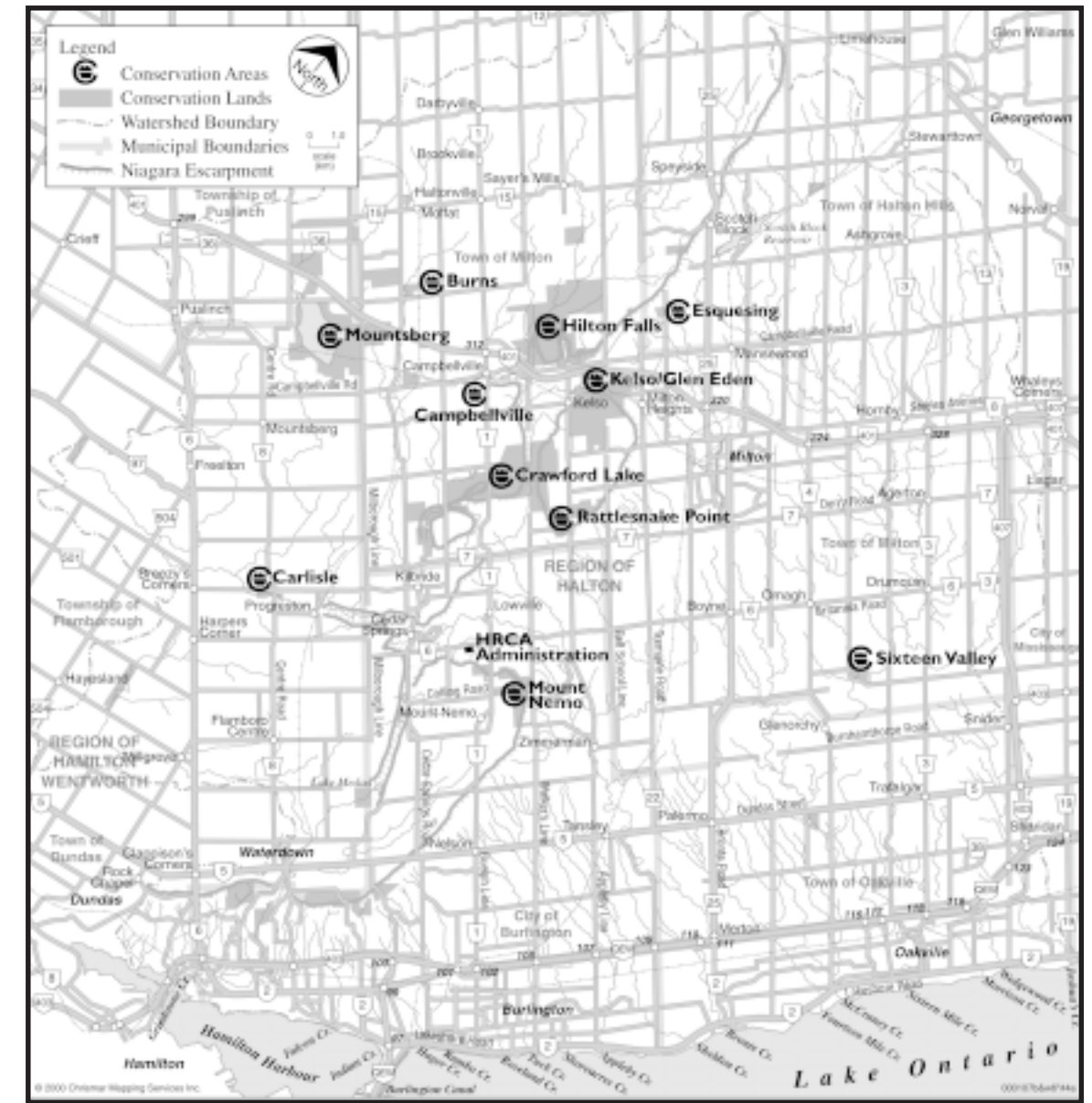
Mount Nemo is a popular rock climbing area due to the clean vertical face of the cliffs that are 30-80 feet high. This high risk sport requires special equipment and training. Rock climbers need helmets, harnesses, climbing shoes and a variety of ropes and protective devices to ensure safe climbing. For beginner rock climbers, it is highly recommended that lessons be taken from a certified professional prior to coming to Mount Nemo.

Due to the sensitive nature of the cliff flora and fauna along with the discovery of the ancient eastern white cedars, a top rope ban has been put into effect.

Hikers should also be careful at Mount Nemo. The cliffs have no barriers at the edges and can be hazardous and quite slippery when wet. *Caution should be demonstrated with young children.*



Visit these other Conservation Halton parks



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

Hilton Falls (905) 854-0262

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

Rattlesnake Point (905) 878-1147

Scenic cliff lookouts, hiking, rock climbing, group camping

Crawford Lake (905) 854-0234

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

Kelso/Glen Eden (905) 878-5011

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

