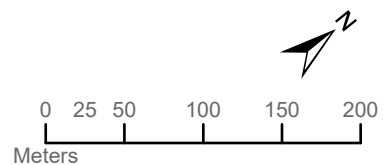


Natural Areas System

2024 NATURAL AREAS UPDATE

SITE AW4

- ▬ NATURAL AREAS
- ▬ VEGETATION COMMUNITIES
- - - SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREAS
- ▬ LINKAGES



AW4

CLASSIFICATION	Park Name	PLANNING DISTRICT	AREA (Ha)
Significant Natural Area	Applewood Hills	Applewood	11.47
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY	SUBWATERSHED	OWNERSHIP	SURROUNDING LAND USE
TRCA	Little Etobicoke Creek	Private/Public	Residential

GENERAL SUMMARY

North along Little Etobicoke Creek from Bloor Street to Burnhamthorpe Road East, between Tomken Road and Dixie Road. Throughout its length Little Etobicoke Creek links many natural areas including: AW1, RW4, and NE5.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

This site encompasses a large portion of the Little Etobicoke Creek valley. The physiography of this site is comprised of sand plain deposits (well sorted sands and gravels) that were deposited in an embayment of glacial Lake Iroquois. Topography is generally level. The bedrock geology of the site consists of grey shales of the Georgian Bay Formation. These are buried by up to 7.5 m of soils and glacial deposits consisting of Oneida clay loams formed in sand plain deposits. Drainage throughout the site is classed as good.

CONDITION

This site is currently in poor condition. Disturbances include erosion control along the creek banks, a lack of woody vegetation cover within the creek, garbage, and an extensive formal trail network. Invasive plant species documented for this site include garlic mustard and Norway Maple, European Buckthorn, and Garlic Mustard. Eighty introduced species are present at this site (representing 51.28% of the total number of species present; a very high percentage). Surrounding land use is residential.

ECOLOGICAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

Number of Plant Communities

Two vegetation communities are present at this site (see accompanying figure); fresh-moist willow lowland deciduous forest type (FOD7-3) surrounding Little Etobicoke Creek and a manicured area (see accompanying figure).

Significant Plant Communities

There are no Significant Plant Communities in AW4.

SPECIES RICHNESS

Flora

The native FQI is 29.30 (an increase from the previous value of 25.49), and the native mean coefficient is 3.36 (an increase from the previous value of 3.09), both low values.

There are 156 floral species documented for this site.

5 plant species considered uncommon within the City (known from 4 to 10 locations).

23 Credit Valley Conservation flora Species of Conservation Concern (Tier 1-3).

Fauna

This site provides limited value from the perspective of wildlife habitat. On the site 25 birds have been noted. Much of the open space is occupied by manicured lawns and a wide paved path, and the riparian area along the creek consists of a narrow band of trees along the immediate edge of the creek. The fauna was typical of narrow linear patches of habitat, with a low diversity. The most common breeding bird species were Red-winged Blackbird, American Goldfinch, American Robin, and Northern Cardinal. Nine Credit Valley Species of Concern recorded from the site during the breeding bird season. Two of these species were documented in 2013: Cooper's Hawk and Cedar Waxwing. Etobicoke Creek is classified as a type 2 fishery within this site.

There are 27 fauna species documented for this site.

9 Credit Valley Conservation fauna Species of Conservation Concern (Tier 1-3), all of which are birds.

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The City park, Applewood Hills, is included within this natural area.
2. Riparian vegetation along the creek should be restored and an unmanicured buffer established.

REFERENCES

City of Mississauga (1978)

Gore & Storrie Limited and R.E. Winter & Associates Limited (1994)

ECOLOGICAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

Fresh-Moist Willow Lowland Deciduous Forest Type (FOD7-3)

The area directly adjacent to Little Etobicoke Creek is composed of scattered mature Crack Willow (*Salix fragilis*) and Freeman's Maple (*Acer x freemanii*) with the occasional Black Walnut (*Juglans nigra*), Green Ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*) and Norway Maple (*Acer platanoides*) that form an open canopy. The canopy is 10-25 m in height and covers 60% of the community. The sub-canopy contains Green Ash, Manitoba Maple (*Acer negundo*), Eastern White Cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*), and Sandbar Willow (*Salix exigua*). Sub-canopy trees are 2-10 m in height and cover greater than 60% of the community. Red-osier Dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*), Tatarian Honeysuckle (*Lonicera tatarica*), European Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*), Fragrant Sumac (*Rhus aromatica*), and Nannyberry (*Viburnum lentago*) are prevalent in the understory that covers greater than 60% of the community with vegetation that is 1-2 m in height. The ground layer predominantly contains Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*), Yellow Avens (*Geum aleppicum*), and Bittersweet Nightshade (*Solanum dulcamara*).

Manicured

In the manicured park, planted trees such as Scot's Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) and Norway Spruce (*Picea abies*) are prevalent. The area below the trees is dominated by grass which is routinely mowed.