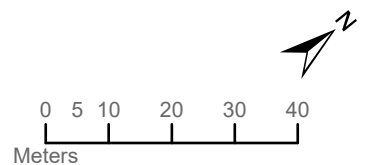


Natural
AREAS SYSTEM

2024 NATURAL AREAS UPDATE

SITE RW4

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



RW4

CLASSIFICATION	Park Name	PLANNING DISTRICT	AREA (Ha)
Significant Natural Area	Rathwood District	Rathwood	1.60
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY	SUBWATERSHED	OWNERSHIP	SURROUNDING LAND USE
TRCA	Cooksville Creek	Private / City	Residential

GENERAL SUMMARY

East of Tomken Road and between Rathburn Road East and Willowbank Trail. The natural areas RW5 and RW6 are located within 500 m to the south east and east respectively.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

This site is in the Little Etobicoke Creek subwatershed. Topography is rolling. Soil moisture is dry-mesic to mesic in the lower portions. Bedrock geology consists of the grey shales of the Georgian Bay Formation. These are overlain by soils and glacial deposits consisting of imperfectly drained Chinguacousy clay loam, formed within Halton till plain deposits.

CONDITION

This site is currently in poor condition. Disturbances present at this site are garbage, dumping of garden refuse, unplanned trails, trampling, soil compaction, past logging evidence, encroachment, man-made structures (lean-to, exercise bars), a fire pit, and vandalism. The edges of the forest community are highly degraded from human impact (increased non-native and invasive species, dumping, etc.). Invasive plant species include Tartarian Honeysuckle, and European Buckthorn, and Garlic Mustard. Fifty introduced plant species are present at this site (representing 35.46% of the total number of species present), a high proportion. Surrounding land use is residential.

ECOLOGICAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

Number of Plant Communities

This site is composed of two vegetation communities (see accompanying figure): dry-fresh sugar maple-oak deciduous forest type (FOD5-3) and sumac cultural thicket type (CUT1-1).

Significant Plant Communities

There are no Significant Plant Communities in RW4.

SPECIES RICHNESS

Flora

The native FQI is 34.72 and the native mean coefficient is 3.64, both are medium values. The native FQI and the native mean coefficient have increased and decreased from the previous values of 34.44 and 3.65, respectively.

There are 141 floral species documented for this site.

There is no locally significant flora documented for this site.

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

Fauna

From the perspective of wildlife habitat, this site is small, though it is of relatively square configuration. It is surrounded by manicured lawns and residences. Breeding birds noted here were generally adaptable species tolerant of urban conditions such as house sparrow (which is dependent on residences for nest sites), American Robin, Northern Cardinal and Black-capped Chickadee. Other species of interest that have been documented from this site include: Sharp-shinned Hawk, Eastern Wood-pewee, Cedar Waxwing, and Gray Catbird. Sharp-shinned Hawks typically prefer mixed or coniferous forests; therefore, this species may have only been passing through this community. Eastern Wood-pewee inhabits a variety of forested areas. Cedar Waxwing inhabits open and early successional communities. Gray Catbirds are

common residents within the City. There are 20 birds and 2 mammals (Gray Squirrel and Eastern Cottontail) documented at this site.

There are 22 faunal species are documented for this site.

1 provincially significant fauna species has been noted on site; Special Concern species in Ontario.

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

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The City park, Rathwood Park, is included within this natural area.
2. Party spots and workout areas have been noted on the site.
3. Encroachment through dumping of yard waste has been noted in the natural area.
4. Access needs to be managed as soon as possible to prevent further degradation.

REFERENCES

City of Mississauga (1978)

ECOLOGICAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

Dry-Fresh Sugar Maple – Oak Deciduous Forest Type (FOD5-3)

This woodlot is composed of Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum* ssp. *saccharum*), Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*) and Bur Oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*). Canopy trees are 10-25 m in height, with some trees greater than 25 m tall, and cover greater than 60% of the community. The sub-canopy consists of an abundance of Sugar Maple, Hop Hornbeam (*Ostrya virginiana*), White Elm (*Ulmus americana*), and Shagbark Hickory (*Carya ovata*). Sub-canopy trees are 2-10 m in height and cover greater than 60% of the forest. The understory is composed of Choke Cherry (*Prunus virginiana*), European Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) and the occasional Tartarian Honeysuckle (*Lonicera tatarica*) with European Buckthorn becoming dominant. Understory vegetation is 1-2 m in height and covers 25-60% of the community. The groundcover is sparse in areas of compacted soil. Yellow Avens (*Geum aleppicum*), European Buckthorn, Kentucky Bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*), Enchanter's Nightshade (*Circaea lutetiana*), False Solomon's-seal (*Maianthemum racemosum*), Thicket Creeper (*Parthenocissus vitacea*) and Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) are the predominant species in the ground layer. Ground vegetation is 0.2-0.5 m in height and covers greater than 25-60% of the community.

Buckthorn, and Tartarian Honeysuckle that are 1-2 m in height and cover greater than 60% of the community. The ground layer is dominated by Garlic Mustard, Field Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), and Smooth Brome (*Bromus inermis*) that is 0.2-0.5 m in height and covers greater than 60% of the community.

Sumac Cultural Thicket Type (CUT1-1)

The thicket has succeeded from a meadow that has been left unmowed as an area of natural regeneration within the park. The canopy of the thicket is sparse (10-25% cover) with scattered Black Walnut (*Juglans nigra*), Manitoba Maple (*Acer negundo*) and White Pine (*Pinus strobus*). These canopy trees are 2-10 m in height. The sub-canopy is dominated by Staghorn Sumac (*Rhus typhina*) and the occasional Nannyberry (*Viburnum lentago*). Sub-canopy species are 2-5 m in height and covers greater than 60% of the community. The understory contains Black Raspberry (*Rubus occidentalis*), European