

Shade's Mills Conservation Area Accessibility Upgrades

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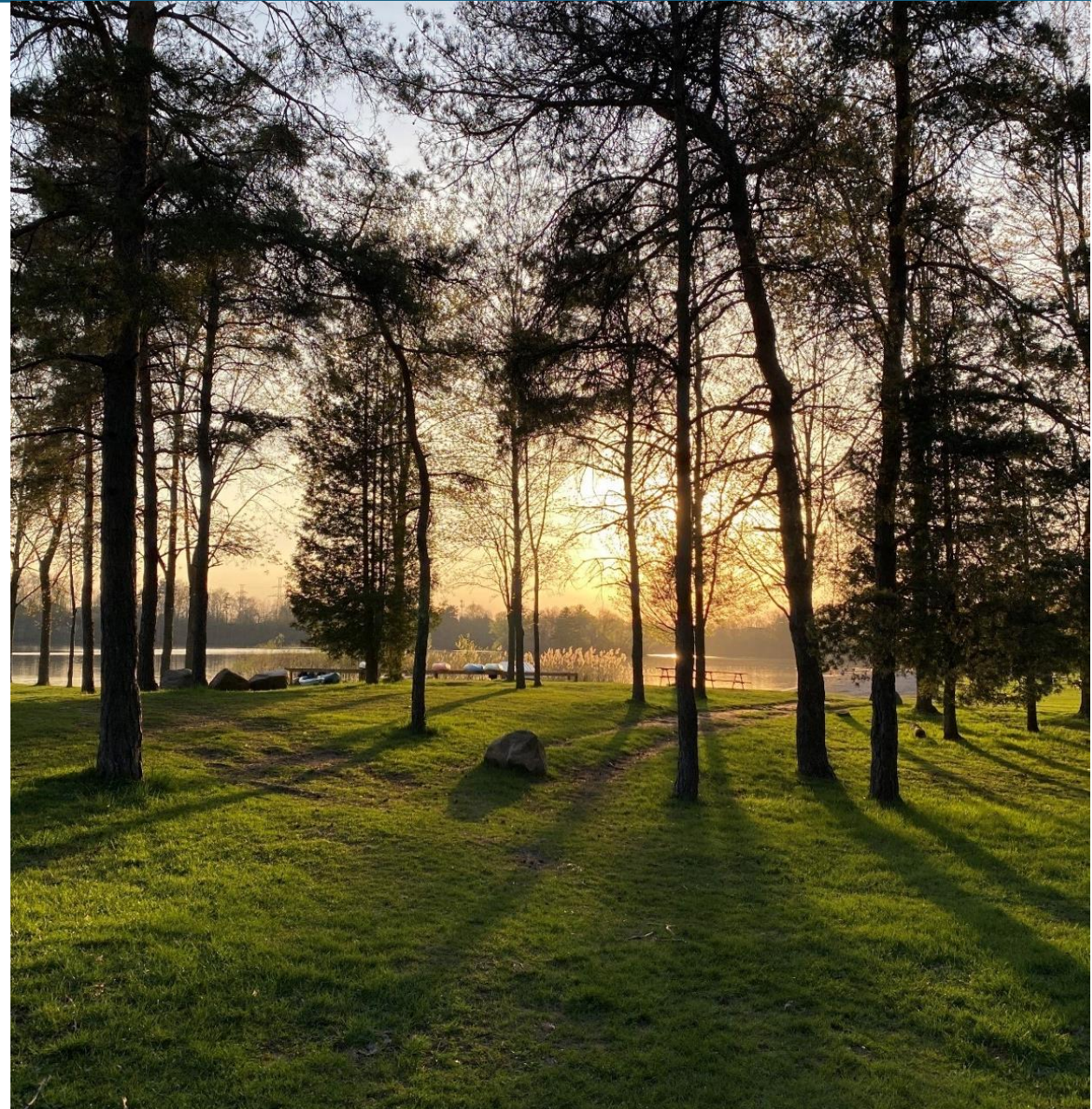


Shade's Mills Conservation Area



Purpose & Background

- **2024 recipient of Government of Canada's Enabling Accessibility Fund**
- **Consulted with Cambridge Accessibility Advisory Committee**
- **2025–2026 project complete**



Accessible Dock



Beach Mat & Access Routes



Floating Beach Wheelchair & All-terrain Wheelchair



All-terrain wheelchair



Floating wheelchair

Soft-sensory Meditation Grove



The TOYOTA Way Trail

Shade's Mills Conservation Area



Map - Recreational Trails



Mill Creek - A Cold Water Stream

Mill Creek is a cold, groundwater-fed stream that supports sensitive aquatic life and fish species, such as brook and brown trout. The infiltrating groundwater helps keep the overall flows cold, and even in the hot summer months only the surface of the creek heats up. Mill Creek is about 20 kilometres long. It starts east of Aberfoyle and flows west through Shade's Mills Conservation Area and Cambridge, where it flows in to the Grand River.



Since 2003, students in the Mill Creek Stewardship Ranger Program, a collaboration between the Grand River Conservation Authority and the community group Friends of Mill Creek, have undertaken many stream restoration projects. Their efforts have significantly improved the health of Mill Creek.

Layers of a Mature Deciduous Forest



CANOPY
The canopy layer forms the roof of the forest. These tallest trees are home to birds, small mammals and insects. Look for sugar maple, red and white oak and hickory. Grab your binoculars - you may spot a great horned owl!

SUB-CANOPY
The sub-canopy includes mid size trees that may grow to become canopy trees. Woodpeckers create tree cavities in this layer that are important habitat for a variety of other species, such as flying squirrels and screech owls.

UNDERSTORY
In the understory you will find tree saplings, small trees and shrubs. This layer provides shelter and food for many wildlife species. Look for alternate leaf dogwood and blue beech trees.

FOREST FLOOR
The forest floor is another important layer. It includes fallen logs and other decaying organic matter, fungi and shade-tolerant plants. It's also home to reptiles and amphibians like the red-backed salamander.

UNDERGROUND
Under the forest floor are the roots of trees and other vegetation, which help to stabilize the soil. There are also vast numbers of micro-organisms that play important roles, such as creating soil nutrients.



Did you know that the mushroom you see above the ground is just the small "fruit" of the much larger organism living underground? Fungi form underground networks that link trees to neighbouring trees. This network helps trees communicate with each other - like a "wood-wide" web!

The TOYOTA Way Trail was made possible thanks to a generous donation to the Grand River Conservation Foundation by Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada.



RBC Barrier Buster Grants Program – Rick Hansen Foundation

- **Grants up to \$40,000 for community accessibility-related projects**
- **Requires letter of support from a community organization or member**
- **Accessible washroom**



Accessible Skid Washroom



Proposed Location





Questions or
comments?