

NATURE RESERVES

Wilfred G. Crozier Nature Reserve

Preserving the beauty and ecology of the Niagara Escarpment has always been a concern for Ontario Nature. The Crozier reserve has played an important role in these efforts. The 4-hectare reserve straddles a section of the escarpment near Milton. Donated to the Federation in the early 1970s by Wilfrid G. Crozier, the reserve allowed the Federation to appear before hearings on the Niagara Escarpment Plan as not only an interested party, but also as a landowner.

The escarpment face, except for the top five metres or so, is mostly buried behind a talus slope. Plants that have managed to gain a foothold in crevasses and on ledges include such uncommon species as Slender Cliff-brake and Walking Fern. Spikenard, Selkirk's Violet and Spotted St. Johnswort are other interesting plants found on the property.

Here, the escarpment rim is dominated by Eastern Hemlock with a scattering of Sugar Maple, Paper Birch, Eastern White Cedar, White Ash, and Red Oak. The cliff-edge forest extends about 12 metres back from the face and then opens into old field again.

Above and below the short cliffs that divide the reserve in half are old fields that have been tilled. In the recent past, these fields have been used mostly for grazing and hay mowing. Now they are good examples of old-field succession communities. A very open cover of young trees such as White Ash and White Elm gives way to mostly shrub cover - Hawthorn, Staghorn Sumac, Chokecherry, Raspberry and the like - as the visitor moves away from the base of the slope.

Because of its location at the end of a dead end road, the Crozier nature reserve has suffered from garbage dumping in the past. The Halton/North Peel Field Naturalists, official stewards of the nature reserve, have done an extensive cleanup of the site. The reserve is part of the Halton Forest North provincially significant Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI). The Bruce Trail runs through the nature reserve.

There are a number of conservation areas in the vicinity including Terra Cotta, Silver Creek, Limehouse, and Crawford Lake.

How to get there

The reserve is 6.5 kilometres north of Hwy. 401 on regional road 25 from Milton, south of Speyside. To access the property, turn west onto St. Helena road from regional road 25. A small parking area is located right at the end of the road. Follow the signs to the Bruce Trail, which runs through the reserve.