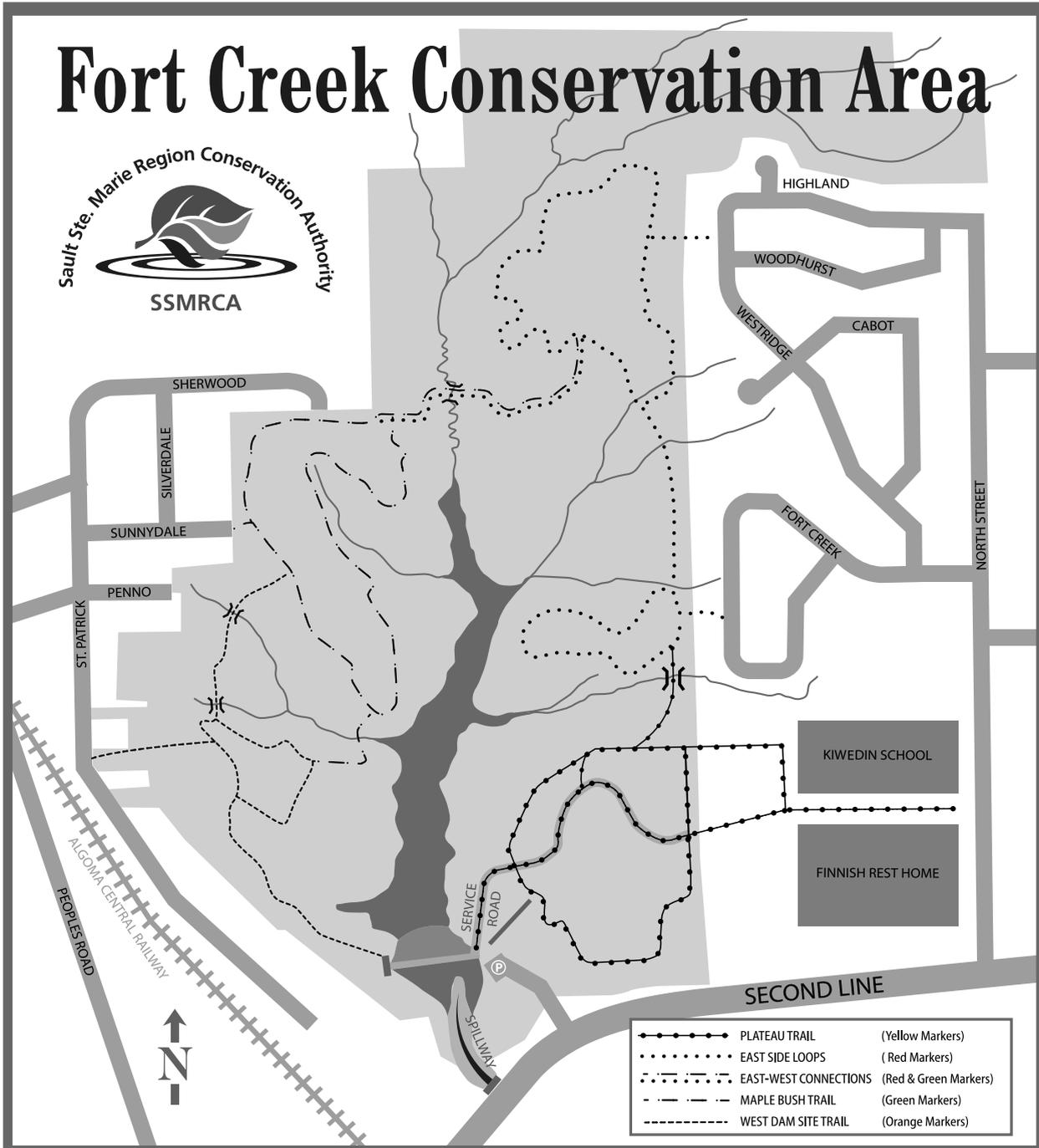


# Fort Creek Conservation Area



## Points of Interest

When the glaciers melted thousands of years ago, the water rose and formed the Great Lakes. The glacial lake's shoreline stretched as far west as Sault Ste. Marie where it formed the Nipissing Bench. The Nipissing Bench has been dated at about 4,500 years old and is made up of a mixture of sediment, clay, gravel and rocks deposited by the glacial retreat. Locally this bench is often referred to as the Korah Bench, and Fort Creek Dam is built on a portion of it.

Also noteworthy is the Monarch Butterfly habitat provided by milkweed. Monarch larvae feed on the milkweeds found in the Fort Creek Conservation Area. As the larvae feed, their bodies absorb the milkweeds poisons. If a predator eats the larvae or adult butterfly the poisons can cause severe vomiting. In the fall, Monarchs butterflies living in colder climates such as northern Ontario travel over 3,000 kilometers, to migrate to the warmer climate of California and Mexico for the winter.

The Fort Creek Dam was one of the first flood control structures built in Sault Ste. Marie, it is positioned at approximately the half-way point of the Fort Creek watershed. The dam protects 0.4 km<sup>2</sup> of floodplain south of the dam over a distance of 4.3 km from St. Marys River to the dam site.

## Trail Use

- \* Hike only along marked trails
- \* No littering, use designated garbage cans
- \* Keep dogs on leash at all times, poop & scoop
- \* Leave plants and flowers for everyone to enjoy
- \* Do not disturb wildlife

# Fort Creek Conservation Area



*Enjoy the Splendor  
of our Backyard*

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## So Much to See and Do

Whether it's hiking, spending a day with children at a picnic or exploring nature, the Fort Creek Conservation Area has something for everyone. The conservation area covers 82 hectares and is roughly bordered by Second Line East to the south, Peoples Road to the west and North Street to the east. Access is available from Second Line East where there is a lighted parking lot. There are six kilometers of nature trails, a dam, reservoir, and a toboggan hill in the park.

flat ground on either side of the dam is called a spillway. If flooding were to occur and the dam could not retain all of the water, this area would act as an overflow where the water could be held temporarily until water levels returned to normal.

### An Outdoor Classroom

The SSMRCA encourages schools and other groups to make use of the conservation area to teach children about nature.

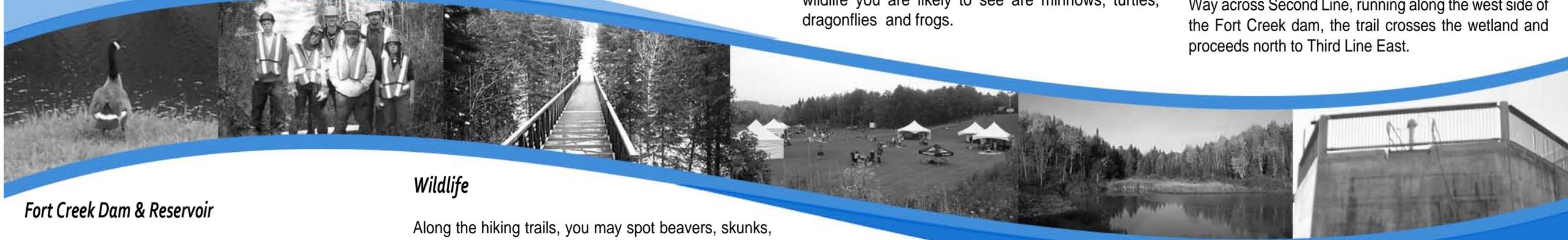
### Wetlands

The Fort Creek Conservation Area contains important wetland areas in an urban setting. Wetlands are essential to the water cycle, they act as filters to remove sediments, absorb nutrients and chemicals from urban runoff, they reduce flooding by absorbing and storing water, their vegetation provides stabilization that reduces erosion along shorelines and they recharge groundwater and can supplement water during low water flows. Wetlands also provide shelter, food and breeding areas for a variety of plants, animals and insects. Some of the wildlife you are likely to see are minnows, turtles, dragonflies and frogs.

actions affect the watershed in which they live. All of the activities were designed to compliment the Ontario curriculum expectations. Students have fun learning about important water issues. Water has played an essential role in Canada's growth, providing food, drink transportation and trade routes. It continues to play an important role in our lives today.

### Hub Trail

Preparation for the Fort Creek section of the HUB Trail began in the Spring 2010. This section of the trail will be approximately 2.6 km long, connecting from Carmen's Way across Second Line, running along the west side of the Fort Creek dam, the trail crosses the wetland and proceeds north to Third Line East.



### Fort Creek Dam & Reservoir

In 1963 the Sault Ste. Marie Region Conservation Authority (SSMRCA) was formed to establish flood control structures to reduce the risk of loss of life and property during flood events. The Fort Creek Dam and Reservoir project began in late 1967 and was completed in 1971.

The Fort Creek Dam is an earthen dam made of compacted earth. The core of the dam is composed of clay, to prevent water seeping through the dam. The dam is 12 metres high and 117 metres long. The hexagonal shaped structure on the east side of the reservoir is an overflow weir which reduces the speed of the water being released from upstream during a flood event.

The main dam together with the reservoir, eliminates most of the historical flooding in the area. The low,

### Wildlife

Along the hiking trails, you may spot beavers, skunks, squirrels and hares. You may also notice tracks from the more shy mink or fox. Common birds to the area include ruffed grouse, woodpeckers, ducks, great blue herons and warblers. Many types of native songbirds can also be seen such as song sparrows, red-winged blackbirds, black-capped chickadees and the American robin.

### Vegetation

In general, the Fort Creek Conservation Area is a mixed hardwood dominated forest. Trees native to the area include balsam fir, poplar, white birch, white spruce, red maple and sugar maple.

Other vegetation commonly found growing in the area are fireweed, wild lily of the valley, common buttercup, starflower, various types of clover and ferns.

### Children's Source Water Festival

The premiere Festival was held at Fort Creek Conservation Area in Sault Ste. Marie in September 2007. The Children's Source Water Festival is a biennial event launched as part of the Sault Ste. Marie Region Conservation Authority's (SSMRCA) involvement in Drinking Water Source Protection. The goal of the Festival is to increase awareness of grade three, four and five students and help them to become water stewards in their home, school and community.

The festival has over 24 hands-on, interactive activities with messages relevant to the student's daily lives. Through the activity centres students discover the importance of water and how their

The reconstruction of Third Line will see the Fort Creek section of the Hub Trail connect to the new Sault Area Hospital site.

Once completed the Hub Trail will be a 20 km multi use non-motorized trail system that will connect the waterfront walkway, Bellevue Park, Algoma University College, Sault College, the new hospital and Fort Creek Conservation Area.

For detailed information on the HUB Trail please contact the City of Sault Ste. Marie at 759-2500 or visit their website at [www.city.sault-ste-marie.on.ca](http://www.city.sault-ste-marie.on.ca).