The Spencer Adventure Trail is entirely within the Niagara Escarpment World Biosphere Reserve. The Escarpment is the exposed edge of an ancient fossilized sea bed which began forming 450 million years ago. In 1990 the United Nations declared it a World Biosphere: a program recognizing balance between sustainable human activity and preservation of environmentally significant areas. Along the Niagara Escarpment you will find 21% of Canada’s endangered species, orchids found nowhere else in the world, and some of the oldest living trees, the Eastern White Cedar, dated at more than 500 years old. For more information, visit the Giant’s Rib Discovery Centre in the Dundas Valley Trail Centre or go to giantrib.ca

THE SPENCER ADVENTURE STORY

The fall is named after Johnson Tew who owned the property and the falls from 1874 to 1947. Tew held a number of political positions in the 1960s. The Spencer Gorge was the very first conservation area opened by HCA in September, 1967.

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CHRISTIE LAKE

Christie Lake Conservation Area offers a world of natural wonders, just waiting to be discovered. Walk 10 kilometers of trails that wind through peaceful meadows, forests, wetlands and stroll along the lakes. Ride the single or double track mountain bike trails, play a round of disk golf on the championship course or relax on the sandy beach. Christie Lake is the perfect spot to pack a picnic and enjoy the great outdoors no matter the size of your group. Your Spencer Adventure takes you along the reservoir and across the road to the Christie Wildlife Area where the Adventure Trail ends.

CROOKS HOLLOW

The Crooks Hollow Conservation Area opened in 1969 as a reservoir with a historic trail following the Spencer Creek through the historic village of Crooks’ Hollow. The dam which created the reservoir was constructed in 1916 for the purpose of supplying water to the community of Dundas, then later, between 1959 and 2001, the Dundas Valley Golf and Curling Club. The reservoir and surrounding lands were used for recreation including hiking, fishing and limited boating. Over the years, the dam became unsafe. Since the reservoir was no longer a water supply and the dam a risk to public safety, the dam was removed along with years of contaminated sediment build-up. The creek was restored to its original condition and is now a flourishing ecosystem. The remains of the old dam now serve as a lookout accessed from the bridge over Spencer Creek. From there you can view a new waterfall created by the removal of the dam.
**MORDEN'S HISTORY AND DAM**

George Morden arrived in Upper Canada in 1797 from Pennsylvania, and was granted land near Greensville. George's son, Jonathan, a sawyer by trade purchased 200 acres of land on the Spencer Creek and constructed the first sawmill on the Upper Spencer in 1801. He was able to force the water over a stone dam and through an opening called a "millrace". Several of the plants and stones used to hold back water at the millrace can still be seen. In the late 1850s, his son, James Morden, added a grist mill to the site. Both mills were destroyed by fire in 1905 and left in ruins.

**COCKBURN DAM AND MILL**

This dam was the fifth to be built on Spencer Creek, used first in 1825 to operate the Kerby sawmill, then in the 1860s for the Wentworth Hub, Spoke and Steam Bending Works which burned in 1879. The foundations were used to construct John Cockburn's saw and planing mill, and later a cider mill operated by Cockburn's son.

**CLARK'S BLANKET FACTORY**

This saw and grist mill was originally built by William Bullock at Bullock's Corners in 1841. Bullock also constructed the British Hotel at the corners. Upon his death, the mill was leased to Matthew Langley and the three Clark brothers: William, James and Andrew in 1858. They converted the mills to manufacture woolen goods and cloth. This mill burned shortly afterwards but was rebuilt as a stone building, turning out woolen blankets until a heavy flood washed out the dam and the building in 1938. It was never rebuilt. The remains of the storehouse, however, have recently been converted to a wellness retreat and spa on the banks of the Spencer Creek.

**DARNLEY (STUTT'S) GRIST & PAPER MILLS**

Construction of the Darnley Grist Mill began in 1811 by James Crooks who named it after an ancestral hero, Lord Darnley of Scotland. The mill was originally square in shape, with three levels. The large wall across the centre of the present structure was at one time the outside wall of the mill. The mill contained four runs or sets of grindstones to produce various grades of flour or meal. After Crooks' death in 1860, the mill was sold to James Stutt and Robert Sanderson. In 1880, he added a steam boiler building to heat the water for papermaking and for auxiliary power. On July 9, 1885, the boiler exploded causing much damage and killing two men. The mill was rebuilt and operated until 1902 when William Stutt succeeded his father as owner. William Stutt leased out the mill to the Adams Cellboard Company and later, the Greensville Paper Company in the 1920s and 30s. In 1934, the mill was gutted by fire and left in ruins. HCA purchased the mill in 1969.