



## Hamilton Watershed Stewardship Program

### A program of:



# LOWER SPENCER CREEK FUN FACTS!

## Dundas, the 'Valley Town'

The first town plot in the Lower Spencer Creek subwatershed was called 'Cootes Paradise' after Captain Thomas Cootes who was fond of hunting in the coastal wetlands. This settlement later merged with the growing community along Lower Spencer Creek which was known as Dundas after the successful Dundas Mills.

*'The scenery around Dundas for beauty and gracefulness is unsurpassed in Ontario.'*<sup>1</sup>

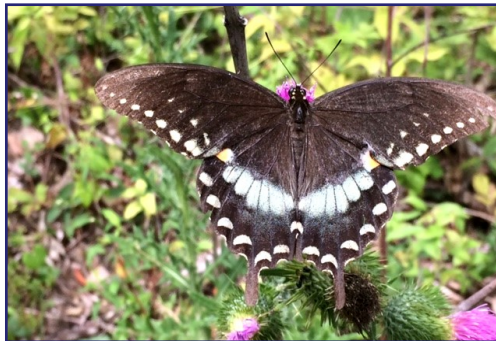
Located in a valley surrounded by the Niagara Escarpment, Dundas is also affectionately called the "Valley Town." The Lower Spencer Creek valley was once home to animals now associated with Northern Ontario. Black bears and wolves roamed the forests and river otters splashed in the wetlands. Lower Spencer still has an abundance of other wildlife, though more inconspicuous, that you may spot if you take the time to look!

**Did you know?** The trail south of Cootes Drive along Lower Spencer Creek was once part of the Hamilton and Dundas Railway which carried passengers between the two towns until 1923.



Photo by Michael Bennett licensed under Creative Commons 2.0

Green Frog



Spicebush Swallowtail



Photo by Greg Schaefer licensed under Creative Commons 2.0

Chimney Swift

Biologists monitor frog populations by listening for breeding calls in the spring and identifying the species based on its unique call. Frogs you may hear near the wetlands on the north and south sides of Cootes Drive are the **Spring Peeper**, **American Toad** and **Green Frog** (sounds like a twangy guitar string). You can learn to identify frog species by sound at the USGS Frog Quiz website.

Sunny open areas and forest edges with blooming native wildflowers that include milkweed and thistles are ideal places to see an abundance of **butterflies**. Pollinator gardens (a combination of nectar plants to provide a food source and host plants for egg laying) also attract a variety of butterflies and other pollinator species.

**Did you know?** When caterpillars enter their cocoon, enzymes break down most of their body cells. The cells are then rebuilt into a butterfly.

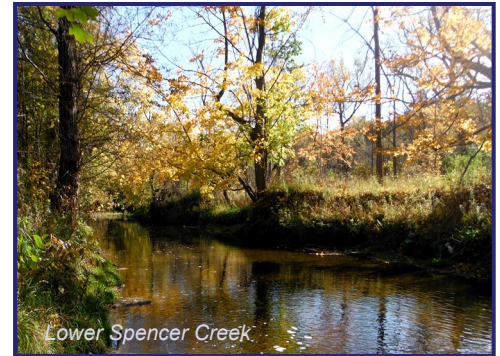
**Chimney Swifts**, a threatened bird species in Ontario, nest in old chimneys including the remaining chimney at Canal Park.

**Did you know?** Chimney Swifts usually return to the same nesting location and have the same mate each year.

## Lower Spencer Creek

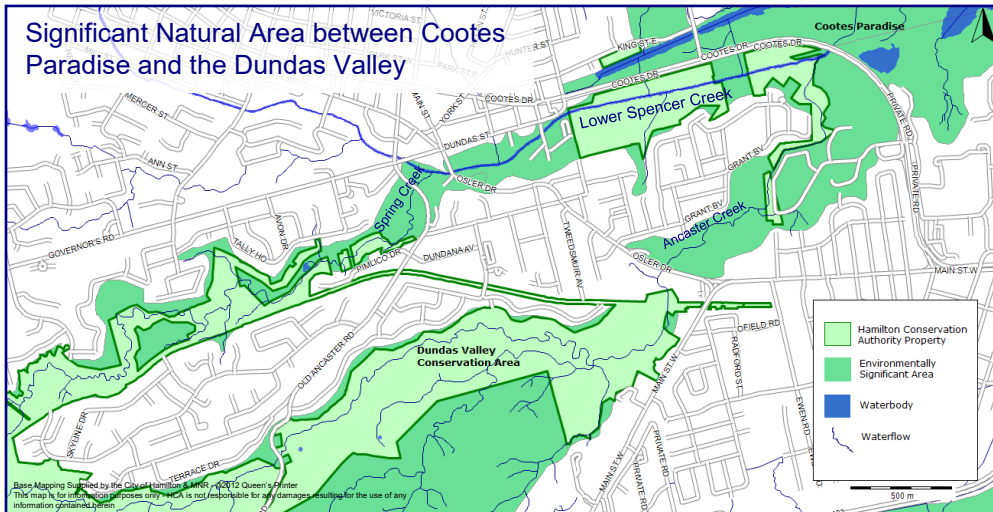
**Did you know?** Spencer Creek is cooled as it flows over Webster's Falls and receives increased amounts of groundwater below the escarpment. This creates cool/coldwater conditions in Lower Spencer Creek.

A buffer of natural habitat between Lower Spencer Creek and urban areas provides shade to keep the creek cool and support cool/coldwater aquatic species such as Chinook salmon.



Lower Spencer Creek

### Significant Natural Area between Cootes Paradise and the Dundas Valley



### THE SALMON RUN

In the fall, mature **Chinook salmon** return from Lake Ontario to their birthplace in Lower Spencer Creek to lay their eggs. The salmon create 'redds' (spawning sites) in gravelly areas by digging shallow holes with their tail fin where the eggs are deposited. Redds are visible from the banks as the salmon clear the dirt and debris from the gravel leaving lighter spots on the creek floor. Spawning is the final stage of the salmon lifecycle and once completed, the salmon die.

The natural areas along the creeks in Dundas are the remaining wildlife corridors, though fragmented by roads and urban structures, between Cootes Paradise and Dundas Valley Conservation Area.

Hamilton Conservation Authority's Canal Park was created to help increase the connectivity between natural areas.

The Lower Spencer Creek lies within the **Dundas Valley 50 Year Vision and Strategy Area** and the **Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark Study Area**. The Dundas Valley 50 Year Vision is a comprehensive community oriented strategy focused on preserving and enhancing the unique culture, character and charm of the Dundas Valley community.

### The Hamilton Watershed Stewardship Program acknowledges:



An agency of the Government of Ontario  
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario



Hamilton



Environment and  
Climate Change Canada

Environnement et  
Changement climatique Canada