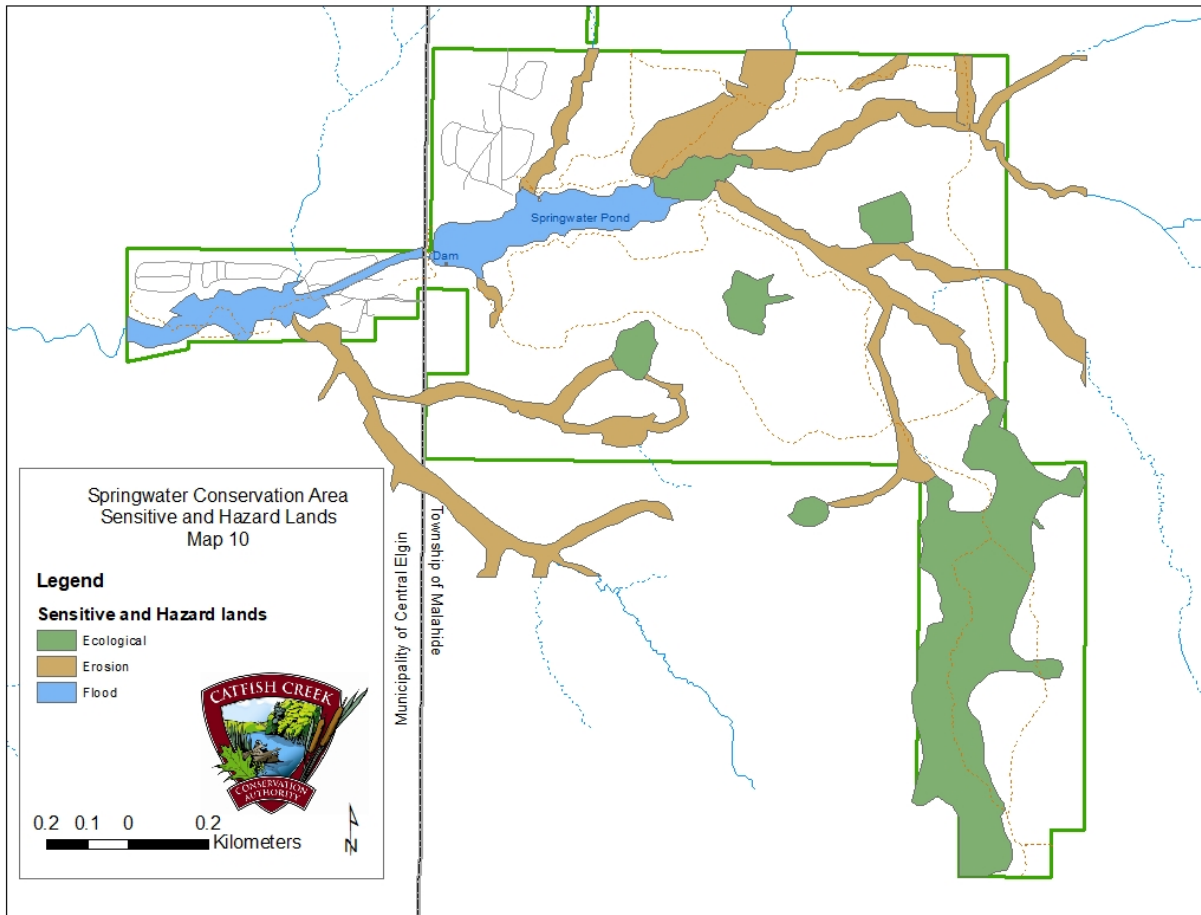


Figure 11: Sensitive Areas and Hazard Lands (Map 10)



Cultural Resources

Historic Features

European explorers first appeared in this part of the province in the late 1660's when Galinee Pere Charlevoix and Dollier de Cassons travelled up many of the rivers emptying into Lake Erie. Because of the abundance of Catfish in this particular watershed, these voyageurs named the stream "la Riviere a la Barbue" (Catfish River). Prior to this European intrusion, Neutral and Iroquois tribes occupied the land at different times.

The earliest settlers on the land straddling from Yarmouth and Malahide came from New York State. One of the earliest landowners in the vicinity of Springwater was E.S. Ganson, who sold his Springwater property along with a grist mill to Ira White. The rest of the history of Springwater prior to purchase of the land by the CCCA is basically an account of the White family in this area.

The first White's who settled in North America were direct descendants of William and Susanna White who came over on the Mayflower in 1620. These White's settled in New York State, some later moving to the southern Ontario area. Ira White, at one time a captain in the U.S. Army, and later a mill wright, was lured to the Preston Hesepler area and afterwards to Markham Township where he built each of his five children a mill. Ira's first wife Elizabeth passed away in 1852 and the following year he was

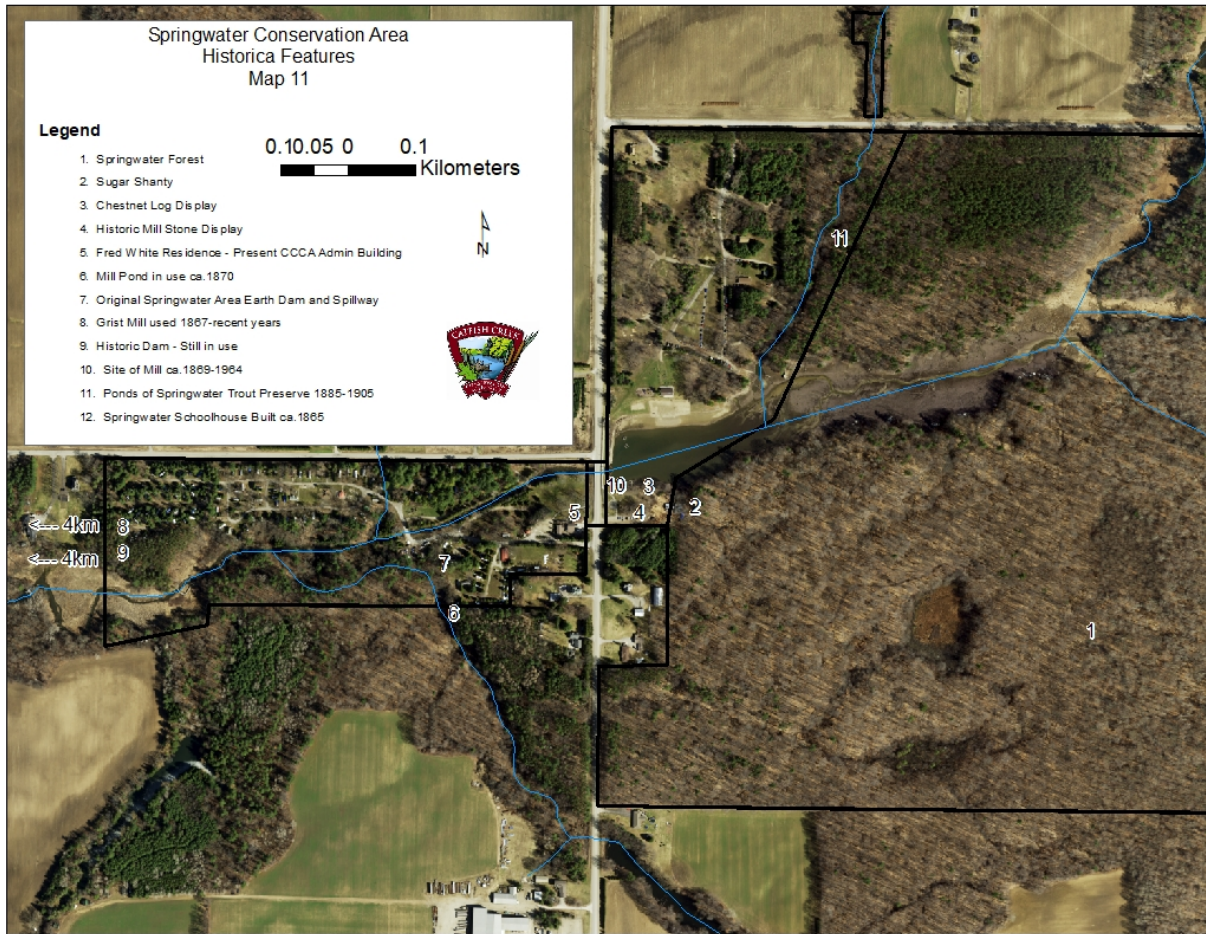
remarried. With his second wife and two of five children, Ira soon moved on to Elgin County and settled on the land which now includes Springwater Conservation Area.

It was in 1860 that Ira and his son Albert purchased a large block of pine timber and a grist mill from E.S. Ganson. Additional land was sold by Charles Lawrence to the White's shortly thereafter. Prior to the development of mills on Bradley Creek at this location, Springwater was described by an anonymous person in the following way:

The central part of the township near the Yarmouth line contains yet (as of 1876) a valuable tract of pine timber nearly all owned by Albert White Esquire. This locality, before saw mills were built, was the paradise of the hunter and trout fisher. Crystal springs gush from the hillsides and form clear purling streams that wind through romantic ravines westward to join the Catfish. All these literally swarmed with fine trout, but the sawdust, and the warming of the water by cutting away the forests and decimation of the angler's hook have made them few and far between.

The White family built their first grist mill on "White's Pond" just west of the conservation area in 1867 to 1868. This five-story structure was operational for many years. Spring-fed "Springwater Creek" was dammed up by the White's just south of the campground wood hut to supply water power for the mill. This earthen dam, 61 metres long and 7.3 metres high, was hand built by a small army of workers and can still be seen today. Refer to Map 11 for the locations of these features.

Figure 12: Historic Features (Map 11)



Another grist mill and saw mill was built in 1870 on the Springwater Pond. The original grist mill burned down about 1905 and was replaced by a cement and concrete block building. The new building was used as a chopping mill until the mid 1920's then practically abandoned. It was finally torn down in 1965 by the CCCA, because it was unsafe and too costly to repair.

When Ira Allen White died in 1887, his son, Albert, inherited all of his father's holdings at Springwater. It was Albert who had the idea of raising fish on the pond created by the 61-meter earth dam. After a few years of successful propagation, the trout became very tame, apparently to the extent the fish could easily be caught by hand. When this tameness became known to others, poaching became a problem and more aggressive bass species had to be stocked. Bass can still be seen in this pond today. The raising of trout became a commercial operation with new ponds installed north of the present day reservoir. The Springwater Trout Reserve was operated by Albert between 1885-1905, with fish being sold to the government for stocking northern streams.

When Albert passed away in 1917, his six sons shared in his distribution of property which totalled at the time more than 526 hectares of land. One of the sons, Frederick David White (born April 28, 1875) inherited the two mills and the forest adjacent to the Springwater Pond.

Fred gained a reputation for his efforts to preserve “White’s Bush” and to protect the wildlife living within the boundaries of Springwater. Fred was indeed a naturalist, always on the lookout for would-be hunters and poachers. He was more than willing to talk to visitors interested in learning more about the flora and fauna of the area.

One interesting thing that Fred will always be remembered for was his ability to lure beavers from Springwater Pond by ringing an old school bell. Once the beavers approached, Mr. White made sure he had pieces of cut-up apple or small tree branches for them to nibble on.

Late in life, Fred White, tried to sell the Springwater property to any group that would continue its preservation. Unfortunately, it was not until 1963, one year after his death, that the CCCA purchased Springwater Pond and the surrounding forest for \$123,500.00.

One of the conditions of the land sale was that the property was “to be preserved in the accepted conservation manner” and that “none of the lands are to be disposed of or leased in any way to private interests.” A second condition was that the name Springwater be retained. Both these requests have been met.

Archaeological Features

Located within the boundaries of the Springwater property is at least one verified archaeological site. The specific location is known by some, although this information should not be given to the general public.

The site has been identified as the “Downpour Site” and through the years many unauthorized “digs” have been done. Some local area residents have rather large collections of artifacts, many of which probably came from this vicinity. A St. Thomas high school group did some extensive and very unprofessional work at the site years ago.

The Downpour Site is actually only in part located in Springwater while the other portion lies within an agricultural field. The open field section has been worked for at least 100 years. The full value of the site has obviously been very degraded, however, its contribution towards an understanding of Iroquoian and Haudenosaunee settlement patterns remains.

Thomas Lee originally stated that the Downpour Site was probably an early representative of the Middle Ontario Iroquois Stage (Uren sub stage). This would date the site to about 1300-1350 A.D. A 1977 document stated that the site was more likely a late representative of the Early Ontario Iroquois Stage (Glen Meyer sub-stage). This is still the understanding today as confirmed by the Aylmer-Malahide Museum & Archives in 2019. Regardless of the classification, this archaeological site reveals clues to the conditions experienced by the Iroquois cultural group over 650 years ago.²³

Educational Features

Several elements of the Springwater area lend themselves to outdoor education and interpretive programs. Explanations on the flora, fauna, historic and hydrologic features of the property have been incorporated into the education programs to varying degrees. The CCCA and other agencies have made

²³ Special thanks to Sarah Bentley, Collections Indexer with the Aylmer-Malahide Museum & Archives for assistance with authoring this section

efforts in several different ways to inform the public about Springwater's biophysical and cultural resources.

The CCCA, for example, has recently developed a Visitor Services Program in the summer months which provides a series of organized events and games for campers, Day Use visitors, and other interested residents or groups. Activities are nature-based and include nature walks, presentations on birds, history and forest management at Springwater, and nature crafts. Additional educational programs using the education programs found within the Catfish Creek Conservation Authority's Environmental Education Guidebook are used to support the Springwater W.I.L.D (Wonder, Investigate, Learn and Discover) Rangers Summer Day Camp, Scouting and Girl Guide programs, and homeschool groups and childcare centers who come for programs.

In 2017, the CCCA received a grant from the Ministry of Tourism and Culture to implement the "Active Naturally Initiative", which was implemented in 2018 and resulted in a new contract position in 2020. In 2018 and 2019 alone, over 3500 new visitors were introduced to the Springwater Conservation Area and Forest through this initiative. Programs include "Healthy Hikes with Ranger Em", litter clean up days, fishing derbies, and presentations by local agencies.

The Jaffa Outdoor Education Center (Jaffa) is operated by the Thames Valley School Board (TVDSB) and shares a portion of the Springwater Forest for the purpose of environmental education and recreational uses. Jaffa has for many years provided opportunities for school children to learn about features of the Springwater Conservation Area and Forest. Jaffa has jointly worked with the CCCA on a range of projects and programs, that include our Maple Syrup Program and the Carolinian Forest Festival. Recent collaborations between CCCA and the Jaffa Outdoor Education Center resulted in several online educational resources and tools for use by both teachers and students. CCCA also has a strategic action to make its education programs mobile, hands on and interactive so knowledge of Springwater can be shared outside its physical boundary.

The Springwater Maple Syrup Festival is an annual education program organized jointly with the Thames Valley Board of Education. Visitors are taught the science behind how trees produce sap and then shown historical and contemporary syrup-making techniques and get the opportunity to sample the finished product.

Exhibits, displays, and trails in the woods help to present information on various elements. The information available here gives an insight into The Carolinian Life Zone and its plants, trees, birds, and other wildlife. Recreational users can also learn about the water cycle, soils, climate change, and the history and prehistory of the property. A special project in 2017, through the generous donations of the Dorothy Palmer Estate, saw new educational signage installed, and the upgrade and refreshing of educational platforms and boardwalks. The CCCA also keeps an updated "Trail Guide" which serves to familiarize forest trail users with their surroundings.

The Carolinian Forest Festival is co-hosted with Kettle Creek Conservation Authority and with other partners such as Jaffa and TVDSB, other local Conservation Authorities, and the Elgin Stewardship Council. Over 2000 students come to Springwater Conservation Area and Forest annually to learn about the Carolinian Life Zone at over 30 unique, interactive stations.

Another important partnership is the Envirothon which is a partnership between Forests Ontario, the Elgin Stewardship Council, and the Thames Valley District School Board. The topic changes annually but is always environment-related, with the Southwest Region competition taking place at Springwater Conservation Area. In 2019, the topic was agroecology, and students were asked to come up with the design of a farm that would use the benefits of various species to improve ecological health, as well as benefit the farm and its operations. Students complete four tests (topics include Wildlife, Aquatics, Forestry and Soils) and provide a presentation to a panel of judges with the winning students moving onto the Provincial Envirothon competition.

Rates for educational users are to be amended to include a single fee. The current Bus Day Pass is not suitable for the groups of users attending by personal vehicle which is common place post pandemic. The updated fee is outlined in Appendix B – Fee Schedule 2021 now includes a Group Car Pass, and is to be added as a pay option through the automated payment system once installed²⁴.

Visual Elements

Springwater presents a unique natural setting amidst a region primarily devoted to agriculture land use. Few scenes in this area can match the one provided by looking east from the dam across the reflective waters of the reservoir to the vast beyond. Looking westward from County Rd. 35 down the Bradley Creek Valley below the dam offers another picturesque view. The streams flowing through the area have cut v-shaped valleys creating a pleasant contrast with the otherwise gently rolling landscape. Walking along the trails in the forest, one is overcome by the imposing height of the mature maple, beech, oak and white pine trees and the accompanying sense of enclosure or isolation.

Vista Number	Description
1	Wide angle view overlooking White’s Pond. Great blue herons are frequently observed.
2	Scenic view down Bradley Creek valley below the dam.
3	Excellent panoramic vista looking east across the pond and surrounding forest.
4	Higher Elevation offering favourable perspective of day-use area, pond and forest.
5	Observation tower at this location provides southward view of the wetland area.
6	Narrow widening spaces of the trail system defined by tall trees and accompanied by a feeling of isolation creates a closeness to nature.
7	Southwest view from concession road overlooking broad riparian valley.

Appropriate locations for the views and vistas described above can be found in Figure 7: Topography (Map 7).

Market Area Analysis

Tourism in Ontario is expected to increase by 2%²⁵, with some reports indicating this could be higher due to recent concerns about out of province travel. Springwater boasts over 280 seasonal sites, and 120 transient campsites and facilitated 3500-person camp nights, and 10,000 visitors in 2019. 2020 saw a further increase in transient camping, in particular throughout the weekdays, making it one of the most popular recreational destinations in the area.

²⁴ As per Motion LMC #02/2021

²⁵ Ontario Tourism Outlook 2019. Ministry of Heritage, Sport Tourism and Culture Industries. http://www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/research/business_outlook/outlook.shtml