



APGO Education Foundation Launches Cootes GeoTrail on GeoscienceINFO.com

November 21, 2023, Toronto, Ontario: The APGO Education Foundation (“APGOEF”) and partner School of Earth, Environment & Society, McMaster University, are pleased to announce the release of the **Cootes GeoTrail**. This virtual tour features 8 stops in Cootes Paradise (see Figure 1), just north of the McMaster University campus in Hamilton, Ontario. To see this as well as all our GeoTrails, visit [our GeoTrails page](https://our.GeoTrails.page).



Figure 1. Map of Cootes GeoTrail showing the location of each of the 8 stops (yellow stars), and the location of McMaster University.

Cootes GeoTrail is located in Cootes Paradise, which is recognized as a National Historic site, a Nationally Important Bird Area, a Provincial Area of Natural and Scientific Interest, and a frequented natural space by the public. Maintained by the Royal Botanical Gardens, it is the largest wetland area west of Lake Ontario and serves as a fish sanctuary and a stop-over point for migratory birds. Due to intense urbanization of the surrounding area, environmental quality of the wetland has diminished. The Royal Botanical Gardens, as well as several environmental organizations, are now taking steps to remediate it. On this GeoTrail, you will learn about valley slopes that were scoured by meltwaters released by the last glacial ice that covered the region (Figure 2). You will also learn about native and invasive species that inhabit the area and why distinguishing between the two is so important to a healthy ecosystem. Your hike will finish with a look at two small islands that were once connected and discover why they look so vastly different today (Figure 3).



Figure 2. Valley slope with glaciolacustrine sediments deposited during the last glacial period, on Cootes GeoTrail.



Figure 3. Cockpit and Hickory Islands, two landforms that were once connected but now are separate, on Cootes GeoTrail.

This GeoTrail was developed by the GeoscienceINFO team led by Manager Dr. Deana Schwarz, P.Geo., and the team from the School of Earth, Environment & Society at McMaster University led by Dr. Carolyn Eyles, P.Geo.. It is part of a growing series of geoscience-based hiking tours released across Ontario that aim to enhance public knowledge of geoscience using a hands-on and virtually accessible approach. We plan to release more GeoTrails in 2023 and subsequent years.

GeoTrails are 1-3-hour hiking tours on maintained trails in Ontario that highlight local geology and describe their geological and environmental significance. GeoTrails can be used as guides while hiking the trail in person, or as a virtual alternative at home or in the classroom. Visiting sites in person is a great way to learn but virtual tours are also an exciting way to expand one's knowledge when in-person access is not possible. Through the use of ESRI's innovative ArcGIS-StoryMap™ application and the integrated features, GeoTrails provide the user with an immersive experience. GeoTrails typically include:

- 360-degree photos and/or drone videos to provide a detailed overview of each site.
- LiDAR-based virtual 3D models that show locations of key features such as fossils, important structures and other geological features at the buildings or rock outcrops.
- Slide bars to show multiple images or overlays of important features or geologic information.
- Descriptions of geological features.
- Audio descriptions of written content.



About the APGO Education Foundation

The APGO Education Foundation (“APGOEF) is a registered charitable organization under the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act, registration number 84604 5052 RR0001.

The purpose of the charity is to advance the education of the public in the area of geoscience by:

- Holding lectures, presentations, and conferences on geoscience both in person and virtually to introduce geoscience to high school and university students as well as enhance the knowledge of the general public.
- Providing scholarships to post-secondary students for the study of geoscience in the final year of a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) degree program.
- Providing bursaries to immigrants to Canada who are internationally trained geoscientists and have demonstrated financial need for completion of licensure procedures for registration as professional geoscientists (P.Geo.s) in Ontario.

APGOEF provides funding to support innovative geoscience education projects working with university geoscience departments, community groups and not-for-profit organizations across Ontario. Please see our website at www.apgoedfoundation.ca

GeoscienceINFO.com an innovative one-stop spot for the public for information about the earth beneath their feet. This new website provides interesting information on all facets of geoscience. A particularly exciting feature of GeoscienceINFO.com is the highlighting of virtual fieldtrips in different areas in Ontario. This enables viewers to experience and learn about the geology of an area while traversing it digitally in ESRI ArcGIS Online™ and StoryMaps™. Information on the latest discoveries and news in the world of geoscience is featured on the website, on our blog [Beneath Your Feet: A Geoscience Blog](#), as well as on our social media.

If you like our work, please consider making a tax-deductible donation to support our programs. Your impact will be **DOUBLED** for donations made to December 31, 2023.

To Donate - <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/apgo-education-foundation>

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