

What follows is a very subjective list but it includes the best hikes in Sydenham to which I would take visitors to showcase the natural beauty of the area.

For further details about each, consult the [Bruce Trail Reference](#), or the [Looping Through Sydenham](#) booklet available in local area stores or order from Bruce Price ... check [SBTC Contact PDF](#) for how to contact Bruce. Cost of the booklet is \$20.

1. **Walter's Falls**: The 4.5 km loop provides an interesting blend of the scenic and the historic. The second half of the 19th century saw the area develop into a thriving community, built around the water power of Walter Creek. At the start, take in the view of the Falls and valley from the observation platform, and then after completing the loop, quench your thirst at the Inn. Other resources: [Coordinates 44.488844,-80.710927](#) | [Walter's Falls Loop map \(PDF\)](#) | [Walter's Creek Management Area 44.497669,-80.722865](#).

2. **Bognor Marsh**: The Bognor Marsh is an amazingly diverse area. One moment you will be standing on the brow of the Niagara Escarpment and soon afterwards you will be searching the quiet waters of the marsh for aquatic creatures. The 5.1 km Bognor Marsh Loop is a good introduction, but for those with time, there are 11.9 km of trails. Other resources: [Bognor Marsh Management Area website](#) | [Coordinates 44.53833,-80.7819](#) | [Google Maps](#) | [Trail Brochure \(static\) Map](#) < Note that this last map is a larger image file on the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority website and may take a few moments to download.

3. **Woodford Trails**: To the east of the hamlet of [Woodford](#), the loop trail features a number of fascinating geological treasures: a giant pothole converted by a 19th century pioneer into a lime kiln; and a “disappearing stream” that for all except two weeks during spring runoff vanishes into the fractured dolostone bedrock. Further on the Trail explores crevices formed when the blocks of dolostone loosened from the main face of the Escarpment.

4. **Bayview Escarpment Nature Reserve**: This reserve is located on an extensive dolostone-capped Escarpment promontory with almost eight kilometres of environmentally sensitive slopes and cliffs. Close to the edge of the Escarpment are deep moss-filled crevices and dramatic outlier rock formations. In the reserve, hikers will find colonies of ferns, including rare varieties such as Hart's Tongue and Walking Fern. Other resources: [Coordinates 44.636842,-80.710816](#) | [Ferns of the Sydenham section](#)



Hart's Tongue Fern

5. **The Palisades Loop**: The Palisades is a rugged corridor that was purchased by the Bruce Trail Conservancy in 2008. It contains about 1000 m of spectacular talus slope with the magnificent beauty of the cliffs towering above. The name comes from the 19th century when the Sydenham Valley was clear-cut of trees. The cliffs seemed like a protective wall to the early settlers who called it “The Palisades.” To reach the summit of the Escarpment, take the blue-blazed lookout trail, called Raven's Nest, and also explore the nearby “Devil's Playhouse” hidden behind rock walls. Other resource: [PDF map](#).

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6. **The Sydenham River Valley**: Hikes in this area range from short walks at [Inglis Falls Conservation Area](#) to a lengthy loop hike north to the [Centennial Tower \(44.557826,-80.925852\)](#) and back along the Rail Trail to the east. At Inglis Falls, the 18 metre high cascade is spectacular. Here in the 19th century was a four-storey mill that served the pioneers from Lion's Head to Dundalk. Short trails near the Falls reveal the natural wonders of the area; for example, explore the Pothole Trail or the Fern Trail. A side trail to Harrison Park leads to beautiful old landscapes and walking paths. The Centennial Tower ([picture](#)) to the north is built on the ruins of a lime kiln and quarry that date back to 1887.

7. **The Glen**: Opened in 2012, the Ron Savage Side Trail reveals the diversity of this natural area. Over one hundred years ago it saw intense logging activity. Then much of the land was cleared for pastures and fields. Today The Glen is comprised of conservation lands. Unexpected discoveries include "Savage Wells", a series of small (seemingly innocent) puddles of water. They are about 5 metres deep, and are probably the legacy of an underground stream and cavern system. Upon leaving the valley floor and climbing the Escarpment, notice the fossils, including thousands of brachiopods. Other resources: [Google Maps Street View of entrance](#) | [coordinates of entrance 44.642208,-81.000396](#).



8. **The McLean Loop**: The Sydenham Bruce Trail Director has referred to this loop as a "jewel" among the many trails established by the club in recent years. The most intriguing part of the loop is the incredible crevice-cave network found less than ten minutes from the parking area along the white-blazed trail. The blue-blazed side trail drops below the scarp edge to Bass Lake, a finger lake carved by glaciation more than 10,000 years ago. The trail then follows the shoreline to the northeast above a marshland where both birdlife and wildflower sightings will tempt the naturalist. Other resource: [PDF map](#).

9. **Kemble Mountain**: This promontory is a headland carved out by glaciers and then shaped when the waters of Georgian Bay were much higher. It is a naturalist's paradise, offering a variety of ecosystems. More than twenty species of ferns can be found here, and in the spring,, ephemerals bring colour to the forest floor. The Nels Maher and Edmunstone loops provide a good introductory hike of less than 3 km. Other options present longer loops from 4 to over 12 km. Other resource: [PDF map](#) | [Google Maps](#).

10. **Overlooking Colpoy's Bay**: The [Sydenham Club website](#) describes this hike as "the gem" of their trails, because of the "many spectacular lookouts over Colpoy's Bay and the many great spots for a picnic lunch." In the 1990's, an American travel magazine called the area one of "the world's nineteen greatest hikes", and it was the only Canadian hike listed. If time allows, also include a hike to Bruce's Caves. These spectacular wave-cut caves represents shoreline erosion by the high waters immediately after glacial melting about 11,000 years ago. It is a classic example of the power of erosion in shaping the Niagara Escarpment, and it is well worth a visit.