



Gould Lake Conservation Area

Mica Mine Trail



Gould Lake

Gould Lake Conservation Area is 589 hectares of wilderness located in the Canadian Shield. It is the headwaters of the Millhaven Creek system. Gould Lake and the surrounding lands are not only important for water management, they also provide excellent wildlife habitat, and offer many opportunities for nature appreciation and recreation in all seasons. Gould Lake is a day-use area.

Gould Lake played a major role as a mica mining centre between 1870 and 1910 - catch a glimpse of local mining history. Remains of many small mines can be found in several locations on the north west trails. Mica minerals can still be seen sparkling in the rock faces or along the trails edge.

Activities & Facilities

Hiking & Snowshoeing: 20 km of wilderness trails cross rolling and rugged terrain. The Rideau Trail crosses the property, orange triangles mark the main trail, blue triangles mark the side loops.

Picnicking: picnic tables, change rooms, and privies are available in the day use area adjacent to the beach. Permits are required for group events and can be obtained by calling Cataraqi Conservation at 613-546-4228 x 222.

Fishing: Fishing is permitted in accordance with current MNR regulations.

Canoeing & Kayaking: Canoes, kayaks, and car top boats can be launched at the beach area; boat ramp facilities are not available.

Swimming: The beach provides an excellent unsupervised swimming area.

Wildlife Viewing & Nature Appreciation: the wetlands, woods, and shoreline areas provide many opportunities for wildlife viewing and nature appreciation.

Education

Gould Lake Conservation Area is home to a number of educational programs. The Limestone District School Board runs their outdoor education programs on the property during the school year and also runs outdoor camping and educational programs in the summer. The portables near the gatehouse are used as their head quarters. Cataraqi Conservation uses Gould Lake as a field trip location during the Nature Explorers Summer Camp. Campers are able to explore the forest and marsh areas, pond dip for wetland organisms, and see if they can catch a glimpse of Porcupine, Gould Lake's famous resident porcupine. Visit www.crca.ca/summer-camp for details.

The Rideau Trail

The main Rideau Trail and several side loops are located within the conservation area. The Rideau Trail Association does most of the trail maintenance and trail development at Gould Lake.

To help protect Gould Lake and to make sure all visitors have an enjoyable experience, please:

- No camping or overnight parking.
- Keeps dogs on a leash (2 m length) at all times. Don't forget to stoop and scoop. Dogs are not permitted in the beach area.
- Stay on the marked trails. This helps prevent damage to sensitive areas and soil erosion. Do not walk off trail, we are trying to encourage natural regeneration of the forest.
- Do not litter. If you find litter, please pick it up and deposit it in the garbage can. pack it in and pack it out - leave only footprints, take only photos.
- Do not damage, disturb, or remove any structure, rock, plant, animal, or other property, living or dead. Picking or digging up wildflowers or other plants is prohibited.
- No fires, hunting or alcohol.
- No ATVs or motorized vehicles.

Cataraqi Conservation owns and maintains over 4,000 hectares of land for resource management, environmental protection, and recreation purposes. One of 36 watershed-based agencies within Ontario, we are dedicated to the conservation and protection of the natural environment.

Gould Lake Conservation Area
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Mine Loop Trail

The Mine Loop Trail is not only known for its cultural significance in Canada's mining history, but also for its natural beauty. Nestled in 589 hectares of wilderness on the southern fringe of the Canadian Shield, Gould Lake Conservation Area rests on the oldest rocks in North America, providing a rich natural area with excellent wildlife habitat.

The Mine Loop Trail features a great view of Gould Lake along the rocky shore. The wetlands, woods, and shoreline areas of the conservation area provide many opportunities for nature appreciation and recreation.

If you were to stand on the Mine Loop Trail over 100 years ago, there may have been over 30 miners blasting away bedrock 100 feet below you.

The Demand for Mica

Mica is a shiny silicate mineral that can be found naturally in individual crystals or in sheets of thin, almost transparent layers. These sheets are chemically inert, elastic, flexible, hydrophilic, and have good insulating properties. They are lightweight and stable when exposed to electricity, light, moisture, and most climatic conditions. Being so versatile, mica was mined for a variety of uses, but is primarily known for its use as thermal glass for lanterns and wood stoves, and as an electrical insulator. In the world of fashion, mica was one of the most widely used minerals in cosmetics and

jewelry, especially throughout India. Ground mica was and is still used today as a joint compound in drywall, acting as a filler to make a smoother finish. Ground mica is also used in paint, to contribute its hydrophilic properties and make the paint water resistant and more durable. This mica was blasted out of the bedrock around Gould Lake, before being sent to trimming factories around Kingston to be split into thin sheets for sale in the market, much of which likely went to the Kent Bros. trimming shed on Brock Street.

Mining at Gould Lake

The Gould Lake area was originally mined for phosphate by Snider & Freeman of Perth in the 1870s, but the major mine on the lake was sold to McClatchey and Hayden of Belleville in 1901, who began working it for mica. The main shaft of the McClatchey Mine was over 100 feet deep, and opened out to a chamber eight feet by 30 feet. One year later, J.W. Trousdale of Sydenham purchased the mine and worked it steadily until 1913, when it was abandoned due to flooding of the mine pit from the lake.

During production, no power machinery was used, and hoisting from the pits was done by horse-derrick and whims. When production ceased, all that was left on the property was a small boarding house, a trimming shed, stable, and other small buildings.

From 1886 to 1920, Canada was actually the world's

chief source of supply of amber mica. However, the discovery of cheaper mica from other parts of the world forced mica mines in the area to cease production, and by the early 1930s, organized mica mining in Ontario had ended. The Gould Lake property was then gradually acquired by Cataraqui Conservation between 1967 and 1972, who bought the land from what was then the Loughborough Township, and from private landowners, to make Gould Lake Conservation Area.

The McClatchey Mine is a perfect example of the deep mine shafts built into the Precambrian bedrock during the mica boom of the time period, and one can easily imagine the hustle and bustle that would have been going on around them (and below them!) when standing on the Mine Loop Trail. The McClatchey Mine and many other smaller mines were started around Gould Lake during the mica boom of the late 1800s and the early 1900s, and their remnants can be seen throughout the Gould Lake Conservation Area Property.

Mica minerals can still be seen sparkling in the rock faces or along the trails.

Fun Fact

The World's largest documented single crystal of mica was found in the Gould Lake mining area at Lacey Mine. It measured 10 x 4.3 x 4.3 metres and weighed about 330 tonnes!