



APGO Education Foundation Releases the Westminster Ponds GeoHike in London, Ontario on GeoscienceINFO.com

October 02, 2025, Toronto, Ontario: The APGO Education Foundation (“APGOEF”) and the Department of Earth Sciences at Western University are pleased to announce the release of the **Westminster Ponds GeoHike** in London Ontario (see Figure 1). This virtual tour features eight (8) stops that highlight the local geology and geological processes. To see this as well as all our GeoHikes, visit [our GeoHikes page](#).



Figure 1. Map of southwestern Ontario, showing location of the Westminster Ponds GeoHike (yellow star).

The entire region that comprises Westminster Ponds and the Pond Mills Conservation Area is the largest publicly owned Environmentally Significant Area (ESA) in London. Its rich ecological diversity and serene landscape make this a popular yet still peaceful escape from the bustle of city life. It is also an area of geological importance. And even though geological features may not be immediately obvious, the ponds present today are the product of dramatic geological events of the relatively recent past.

Begin your tour at Stop #1 and read about the ecological significance of the area as well as history of the region. Continue to Stop #2 to examine decorative fossiliferous limestone blocks (see Figure 2) that are perfect for sitting down on and contemplating our place in geological time. Stop #3 highlights the stunning scenery of Saunders Pond and how this beautiful site was created by chunk of glacial ice over 12,000 years ago. Stops four to seven will take you through the dense and lush forests here and lead you to the



spectacular Spettigues Pond at Stop #8 (see Figure 3). As you bob up and down on the floating dock listening to the frogs trying to lull you to sleep, be sure to appreciate the rising slopes surrounding the pond, that remind us of the glacial processes that shaped this land so long ago.



Figure 2. Fossiliferous limestone boulder at Stop #2 at the Westminster Ponds GeoHike.



Figure 3. A fine summer day at Spettigues Pond on the Westminster Ponds GeoHike.

The Westminster Ponds GeoHike was developed by the GeoscienceINFO team led by Manager Dr. Deana Schwarz, P.Geo., and the Department of Earth Sciences at Western University, led by Dr. Alina Shchepetkina and her team. It is part of a growing series of geoscience-based hiking tours released across Ontario that aims to enhance public knowledge of geoscience using a hands-on and virtually accessible approach. We plan to release more GeoHikes in 2025 and subsequent years, throughout Ontario.

GeoHikes are 1-3-hour non-intensive hiking tours on maintained trails in Ontario that highlight local geology and describe their geological and environmental significance. GeoHikes can be used as guides while walking 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, GeoHikes provide the user with an immersive experience. GeoHikes 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.



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About the APGO Education Foundation

The APGO Education Foundation 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 – see <https://apgoef.ca>. [GeoscienceINFO.com](https://apgoef.ca), developed by the Foundation, is an innovative one-stop spot for the public to gather information about the earth beneath their feet. This website provides interesting information on all facets of geoscience. A particularly exciting feature of GeoscienceINFO.com is the highlighting of virtual field trips in different areas in Ontario. This enables viewers to experience and learn about the geology of an area in person or while traversing it digitally in ESRI ArcGIS Online™ and StoryMaps™.

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