EXPERIENCE COMPANION · AGES 9–14

Walk Cootes Paradise

Name _____

Date _____

Walk the trail around Cootes Paradise, a marsh at the west end of Hamilton Harbour on Lake Ontario, with Robin, a wetland ecologist. Fill this in as you go.

Open it: inthelakes.ca/learn/experiences/wetland/cootes/ · About 45–60 minutes

1 On the trail

Stop 1, A marsh in the city: Hamilton Harbour is a Great Lakes "Area of Concern". What does that mean?

Stop 2, Princess Point: the Princess Point culture were some of the first people in Ontario to grow which crop?

Stop 3, The marsh that vanished: by 1990 almost every plant was gone. How did each of these hurt the marsh?

Cause	How it hurt the marsh
Sewage	
Soil washing in	
Carp	

Stop 4, Where the city drains in: draw or explain a combined sewer overflow. What happens in a big storm?

Stop 5, Planting a marsh back: why is there a fence in the water around the planting?

Stop 6, Eagles over the marsh: why is a pair of eagles raising chicks here a good sign for the marsh?

Stop 7, The fishway: how do the grates keep big carp out but let small fish through?

> **Carp in the marsh:** about 70,000 before the fishway opened in 1997, and fewer than 1,000 after.

❷ Testing the water

You test three spots: inside the planting enclosure, the mouth of Chedoke Creek, and the open marsh at the fishway. The readings are simulated from today's weather, so yours may differ.

Test	Planting	Creek mouth	Open marsh
Water temperature (°C)			
Dissolved oxygen (mg/L)			
Conductivity (µS/cm)			
pH			
Clarity (cm)			
Phosphate (µg/L)			
Nitrate (mg/L)			
E. coli colonies on the plate			
E. coli (per 100 mL)			

Ontario's limit for swimming beaches is 200 E. coli per 100 mL. Which spots were over it? Where does E. coli come from?

Which spot had the clearest water? Why do you think it was clearer there?

❸ Under the microscope

Draw one tiny living thing you found. Write its name and the spot you found it at.

What did you find at each spot?

Spot	Tiny life I found

❹ In your own words

What is helping Cootes Paradise come back to life, and what still needs to be fixed?