

The joy of being eco-friendly

[Experience](#), [Personal Experience](#)



Growing up in Hamilton Ontario has allowed me to visit many waterfalls and hiking trails. Hamilton is known to be the “ City of Waterfalls” with 156 natural attraction sites. A popular hiking trail near McMaster University that I have not visited before would be Dundas peak. Immediately, I thought it would be a great opportunity to visit this site for my experiential learning activity. To prepare for my hike I wanted to take on an eco-friendly mindset to accomplish some of my goals. On Tuesday, October 9th, the weather was 26 degrees which was a good indication for a perfect day to go hiking. In order to plan and prepare for my hike, I had checked the weather a couple days prior. I had also messaged a couple of my friends inviting them to join me on my eco-friendly adventure. I mentioned to them that it was a good idea to carpool together. Finally, in preparing for my hike, I had also checked what busses I would need to take in advance.

The thought of going on this hike gave me a feeling of happiness, relieve and excitement. It was as if this hike has put me in a stress-free mindset for the day, an indication of a phycological effect on me. Having said this, research shows that ‘ forest bathing,’ the practice of spending time in a wooded area is good for your mind, body, and spirit. It was around 1: 00 pm on October 9th when I decided to get moving. I packed my lunch in a plastic tupperware container and grabbed my reusable water bottle. I departed my house 15 minutes prior to the bus time arrival and got on the bus arriving at Dundas peak in a little under an hour. I met my friends who wanted to join me on the hike and explore the nature around McMaster. The trails were easy to walk through with an astonishing view of the greenery in the city. It was a little disappointing to see that many people still littered in such a beautiful area,

although garbage cans were accessible all over the site. It was frustrating to see that many people were so lazy and careless. The area offered two waterfalls (Tew falls and Webster's falls) and an amazing view at the peak which showed off the city of Hamilton. Looking down at the waterfalls, I could see pieces of garbage stuck in-between the rocks and plastic water bottles floating across the water. All I could think about was how littering has a direct effect on the public, our water systems and increases global warming as a whole. Littering consists of harmful toxic substances that can have a direct negative effect on the deer, birds and aquatic life in the area.

Items such as broken glass, cigarettes, soda cans, and food wrappers were scattered along the trail and negatively affected the image of what was once a pure place. Along our walk, seeing all the litter was very disappointing and upsetting. I immediately recommended that we pick up at least 5 pieces of garbage off the ground during our walk and dispose of them properly.

Everyone was on board with the environmental clean-up and had an amazing time enjoying the fresh and refreshing weather. My experience on the hike was directly related to some of the learning goals that I wanted to accomplish by the end of the semester. The biggest take away from this whole experience was that I was able to reduce my ecological footprint while having an enjoyable time.

As a part of goal one, I was able to use my reusable water bottle and pack my food in a reusable container instead of using plastic bags. This activity helped me to realize the small changes which I can make in my everyday life to become more environmentally conscious and sustainable. The second

goal I was able to accomplish was that I was able to have a direct impact on my friends that joined me on the hike. I was able to inspire them to adopt an eco-friendly mindset and join me to clean the area as well as to carpool together to reduce CO2 emissions. A potential fix for all the garbage which had been laying along the trail is to have signs placed along the trail stating to kindly please dispose of your garbage responsibly. Although it is quite obvious that it is illegal to litter, placing signs to reinstate the laws against littering along the trail is another potential fix.

Lastly, I was able to take part in completing goal number five by reducing the use of my car and taking the bus. During this experience, I had to walk 15 minutes to my bus stop and take the bus. I felt happier because I was able to wake up and plan my day properly according to bus schedules. A study shows that taking a bus or train gives people time to relax, socialize and the walk usually associated with taking the bus or train appears to put people in a happier mood. By eliminating the use of my car for that day, it inspired me to take the bus and use other modes of transportation more often to reduce my own CO2 car emissions. Overall, I truly feel that by trying to accomplish a small part of every one of my goals, it puts me in a better position to make a difference in my community.