

Falcon Lake Trail and West Hawk Lake Area Field Trip
Native Orchid Conservation Inc. – July 5, 2014

The rocks of the Whiteshell Provincial Park are some of the first rocks to form on Earth. The Falcon Creek Trail reveals that glaciers once covered this land, with rocks and boulders being scattered randomly as the ice receded. The patches of the dark green bedrock are basalt, made from cooled lava and ash from volcanoes under an ancient ocean ca. 2.5 billion years ago.

The gigantic granite rock is an erratic. Massive glaciers several kilometres thick have scoured the Earth since the Precambrian Era 2.5 billion years ago, scraping and scratching and polishing these rocks. The last great glacier covered this area for more than 50,000 years. It took 5,000 years to melt and left behind this massive piece of granite 10,000 years ago. These rocks have gone through at least 20 ice ages, each lasting thousands of years.

The old volcanic mountains rock is fine grained so you cannot see the mineral crystals as in the erratic. At some point they were buried deep underground where heat and pressure changed them. These rocks have gone through metamorphism, been scoured by glaciers, wandered the world, and blown from volcanoes. These rocks are so old they have no fossils in them because they formed before plants and animals existed.

Lichens are among the oldest living things on Earth. They produce acids that break down the rock.

Long after the volcanoes cooled and the rocks metamorphosed, something caused fractures in the rocks. It might have been the meteorite at West Hawk or a shift in the plates that opened the fissure. When the crack opened, magma from deep within the Earth, pushed up to fill it. This smoky-white rock is quartz and it runs in a vein along the trail. The Trans-Canada Pipeline runs parallel to the trail here. The rocks have been blasted to lay the pipeline. They are so old they were old when the meteorite smashed into the Earth and formed West Hawk Lake 100 million years ago.

The Whiteshell Fish Hatchery interpretive centre explains how hatcheries and stocking programs work in Manitoba. . Since it opened in 1942, the hatchery has been raising lake sturgeon, trout, walleye and other species to replenish Manitoba's fishing stock

Species list for Falcon Creek Trail:

Red pine (parking lot)	Blue-bead lily (<i>Clintonia borealis</i>)
Yarrow (<i>Achillea millefolium</i>)	Ox-eye daisy (<i>Chrysanthemum leucanthemum</i>)
Wild Sarsaparilla (<i>Aralia nudicaulis</i>)	Bladder campion (<i>Silene cucubalus</i>)
Bunchberry (<i>Cornus canadensis</i>)	Nodding chickweed (<i>Cerastium nutans</i>)
Tall buttercup (<i>Ranunculus acris</i>)	Rough cinquefoil (<i>Potentilla norvegica</i>)
Canada anemone (<i>Anemone Canadensis</i>)	Spreading dogbane (<i>Apocynum androsaemifolium</i>)
Wild red raspberry (<i>Rubus adaeus</i>)	Nodding trillium (<i>Trillium cernuum</i>)
Balsam fir (<i>Abies balsamea</i>)	Dewberry (<i>Rubus pubescens</i>)
Twinflower (<i>Linnaea borealis</i>)	
Wild buckwheat (<i>Polygonum convolvulus</i>)	

Boletus spp. (mushroom)
Tall lungwort (*Mertensia paniculata*)
Twisted stalk (*Streptopus roseus*)
Wild Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*)
Current (*Ribes* spp)
Western wild ginger (*Asarum caudatum*)
Creamy peavine (*Lathyrus ochroleucus*)
Marsh marigold (*Caltha palustris*)
Snakeroot (*Sanicula marilandica*)
Cleavers (*Galium aparine*)
Pink corydalis (*Corydalis sempervirens*)
Wintergreen (*Pyrola* spp)
Richardson's alumroot (*Heuchera richardsonii*)
Narrow-leaved hawkweed (*Hieracium umbellatum*)
Narrow-leaved Meadowsweet (*Spiraea alba*)
Jack pine (*Pinus banksiana*)
Common blueberry (*Vaccinium myrtilloides*)
Common juniper (*Juniperus communis*)
Three-toothed cinquefoil (*Potentilla tridentata*)
Small-leaved pussy toes (*Antennaria microphylla*)
Common bearberry (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*)

Common harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*)
Dentinum sp. (mushroom)
Blue flag iris (*Iris versicolor*)
Moccasin flower (*Cypripedium acaule*)*
(seed pod)
Common Labrador tea (*Ledum groenlandicum*)
Paper birch (*Betula papyrifera* var. *papyrifera*)
Northern starflower (*Trientalis borealis*)
West/east wood lily (*Lilium philadelphicum* var. *andimum* or var. *philadelphicum*)
Bicknell's Geranium (*Geranium bicknellii*)
Northern Bedstraw (*Galium boreale*)

Timothy (*Phleum pratense*)

Common scouring rush (*Equisetum hyemale*)
Stiff club-moss (*Lycopodium annotinum*)
Ground-pine (*L. obscurum*)

Oak fern (*Gymnocarpium dryopteris*)
Fragrant shield fern (*Dryopteris fragrans*)
Rusty woodsia (*Woodsia ilvensis*)
Lady fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*)

Hwy 44 (right hand side just past fish hatchery):

Cow-parsnip (*Heracleum lanatum*)