

# Rock Climbing in Identified Sensitive Areas & Bill 26

By Adam Pearce

I am writing to express deep concern about the increasing and largely unregulated impact of rock climbing on the sensitive ecological and geological features of the Niagara Escarpment. The recent steps by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) to invoke Bill 26—potentially overriding long-standing environmental protections—pose a serious threat to the health of this UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve.

The tragic death of a climber at Mount Nemo earlier this year is a stark reminder of the dangers associated with unregulated climbing. Within 48 hours of this fatal incident, the site was reopened to the public. This raises a deeply troubling question: was the remainder of the rock face even assessed for structural stability before welcoming back climbers, hikers, and other recreational users? The risks are not hypothetical—this could happen again, and not only to climbers, but also to unsuspecting families, nature lovers, and other trail users.

Ontario Parks was established to safeguard ecologically sensitive areas for the benefit of future generations—not to allow recreational activities to develop unchecked and without proper oversight. Allowing climbing route development by individuals without formal engineering backgrounds or ecological

training leads to the destabilization of the rock face and disruption of delicate ecosystems. Such alterations are not only dangerous but often irreversible.

In addition, we have submitted a Freedom of Information request that we believe will reveal that Ontario Parks, MECP, and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) are knowingly failing to uphold protections for identified species at risk—specifically, a bat hibernaculum located within one of the impacted areas. This is not only ethically questionable, but legally and scientifically indefensible. We would be more than willing to share the FOI findings with *Niagara Escarpment Views* once we receive them.



▲ Bolts and chains attached to the Escarpment cliff face at one popular rock climbing location. PHOTO BY MIKE DAVIS

**Hikers!** Picnic lunches available  
Call ahead to order, pick up  
before hike or come in for lunch!

**GF & Gourmet Cheese**  
4600 Victoria Ave., Vineland  
289.567.0487 | goculinary.ca

**Sam Oosterhoff, MPP**  
*Niagara West-Glanbrook*

Proud  
Supporter  
of the Niagara  
Escarpment

[sam.oosterhoffco@pc.ola.org](mailto:sam.oosterhoffco@pc.ola.org)  
**Beamsville Constituency Office**  
4961 King Street East, Unit M1  
(2nd Floor, No Frill's Plaza)  
Beamsville, ON L0R 1B0  
905-563-1755

[www.samoosterhoffmpp.ca](http://www.samoosterhoffmpp.ca)

**YOUR Voice IN OTTAWA**

**TONY BALDINELLI**  
MP | NIAGARA FALLS—NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE

**NIAGARA FALLS/NOTL OFFICE:**  
4056 DORCHESTER ROAD, SUITE 107  
NIAGARA FALLS, ON L2E 6M9

**TONY.BALDINELLI@PARL.GC.CA**  
TONYBALDINELLI.MP.CA  
905-353-9590

**Dan MUYS**  
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT  
FLAMBOROUGH—GLANBROOK—BRANT NORTH

**Dan Muys, M.P.**  
905 692 2917  
[Dan.Muys@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Dan.Muys@parl.gc.ca)

**JENNIE STEVENS**  
Proud to be the  
voice of St. Catharines  
residents!

**JENNIE STEVENS**  
[jstevens-co@ndp.on.ca](mailto:jstevens-co@ndp.on.ca)  
905-935-0018  
[jenniestevens.ca](http://jenniestevens.ca)

**JJ's ON THE DOCKS EATERY**

**Good Food, Good Folks, Good Value.**

15 Lake Street, Unit E., Grimsby, ON L3M 2G4  
289 235 7777 [jjsonthedockseatery.ca](http://jjsonthedockseatery.ca)