

Everyday Guide to the **YORK REGIONAL FOREST**



EXPLICIT RULES IN PLACE

EFFECTIVE MAY 29, 2020 UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

In response to COVID-19 and in consultation with York Region Public Health, the following explicit rules are in place for all users at the York Regional Forest and its 22 public forest tracts:

- **ALL dogs MUST be leashed** at all times
- **Practice physical distancing** of at least 2-metres between yourself and other forest users, both on the tracts and in common parking areas
- **Wear a cloth or non-medical mask** where physical distancing may be challenging
- **Do not litter**, including garbage, gloves and masks and pet waste
- **Please be kind** and act responsibly

Staff are monitoring the tracts and parking lots to remind people of these rules.

DOG OFF-LEASH AREA


EFFECTIVE MAY 29, 2020 UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

The following guidelines are in place for all users of the Dog Off-leash area at the Bendor and Graves Tract found near the parking lot at 17858 McCowan Road (pg. 31):

- **Keep 2-metres** from others
- **Wear a cloth or non-medical mask** where physical distance may be challenging.
- **Ensure dogs are leashed** outside of the off-leash area (eg. parking areas)
- **Stoop and scoop** all pet waste
- **Do not litter**, including garbage, gloves and masks and pet waste
- **Be aware of high-touch surfaces** (i.e., gates and benches) and practice proper hand hygiene after touching

Visitors are reminded to use it at their own risk.

For more information about York Region's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and temporary service disruptions and closures, visit york.ca/COVID19



Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.

Please contact us by email at accessyork@york.ca or by phone at 1-877-464-9675

Spending time in nature can make you happier, healthier and more relaxed.

The York Regional Forest is the perfect place to enjoy fresh air and connect with nature. Enjoy strolling, running, horseback riding, biking or snowshoeing on more than 150 kilometres of scenic trails in 22 public forest tracts including accessible trails in the Hollidge Tract, North Tract and Hall Tract.

Spending time in the forest can help reduce stress and lower your chances of developing chronic disease. When you visit the forest, remember to:

- Check weather forecasts and dress accordingly, protect yourself from harmful UV rays
- Wear insect repellent, closed-toed footwear, light coloured, long-sleeved shirts and long pants, tucked into your socks
- Bring healthy snacks and water
- Stay on the trail – poison ivy is common in all forests
- Aim for 60 minutes of physical activity per day for kids and 150 minutes per week for adults
- Take only photos and leave only footprints

Discover better health in a forest near you.

york.ca/yrf

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RULES OF THE FOREST

Appropriate etiquette among trail users makes for a better experience for everyone.

Follow the “3 Cs”:

Common sense, Communication and Courtesy

Right of Way

The most mobile users should yield the right of way.

- Cyclists should yield to everyone
- Hikers and dog walkers should yield to horses

Dogs

The York Regional Forest is **not** an off-leash dog park.

- In response to COVID-19 until further notice, **ALL dogs MUST be leashed at all times**
- Stoop and scoop all pet waste
- Place bagged pet waste in the garbage cans located in the parking area
- Do not hang or leave pet waste bags in the forest

Check out the dog off-leash area at the Bendor and Graves Tract (pg. 31), found near the parking lot at 17858 McCowan Road.



Mountain Biking

The Brown Hill Tract (pg. 32) in the Town of East Gwillimbury offers more than 15 kilometres of trails. This tract provides some of the best mountain biking terrain in the Greater Toronto Area.

Use the trails, but remember:

- Always wear an approved helmet
- Stay on the trails
- Slow down and yield to others
- Let others know you are approaching them from behind
- Avoid using trails after heavy rainfall or wet periods, especially in the spring
- Leave nothing behind but tracks
- Be courteous to other users

Snowmobiling

Snowmobiling is only permitted on trails operated by the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs in the Pefferlaw Tract (pg. 36).

These trails are maintained by the Heart of Ontario Snowmobile Club.

For more information, please visit heartofontario.ca



Equestrians

One hundred years ago, horses were the most common method of transportation. Today, the horseback rider is sometimes a forgotten trail user. The Ontario Trail Riders Association (OTRA) and York Region Forestry work together to ensure equestrians have a home in the York Regional Forest.

To learn more about horseback riding in Ontario, please visit oftr.ca

Dog Sledding

Some of the best dog sledders in Ontario train in the York Regional Forest from September to April. Like all users, they are respectful of others, so don't be alarmed if you see (or hear) them coming around the bend!



Take only memories and photos.
Leave only foot, paw or hoof prints.

HUNTING

In accordance with federal and provincial legislation and local municipal "Discharge of Firearms" bylaws, hunting is permitted in three York Regional Forest tracts:

- **Pefferlaw Tract (pg. 37), Town of Georgina**

Hunting is permitted only in the parts of the tract outside of the No Discharge of Firearms area. Please refer to the Town of Georgina Discharge of Firearms Bylaw.

- **Cronsberry Tract (pg. 35), Town of Georgina**

- **Metro Road Tract (pg. 36), Town of Georgina**

Only bow hunting is permitted.

Hunting is prohibited in all other York Regional Forest tracts.

Hunters should consult local, municipal and provincial hunting regulations before hunting in these tracts.

Town of Georgina "Discharge of Firearms" Bylaw

905-476-4301 or georgina.ca

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry Hunting Regulations

1-800-667-1940 or mnr.gov.on.ca

1-866-686-6072 (TTY)

FOREST SAFETY

York Regional Police are a welcome presence in the forest. As a member of the Regional Forest Advisory Team, York Regional Police keep the Advisory Team and forest users informed of important issues to help ensure the forest remains safe and enjoyable for all.

Emergency Access Numbers (green numbers) are found on signs at many of the main entrances to forest tracts. Take note of these numbers to direct emergency personnel to the closest access point in the event of an emergency. These numbers are also listed on the maps in this booklet.

REWARD – Crime Stoppers will pay a cash reward of up to \$2,000 for information leading to an arrest for vandalism, theft, use of unauthorized vehicles or illegal dumping on forest property and/or facilities.

**For more information or to report a crime,
call 1-800-222-TIPS (8477).**



COVER UP IN THE FOREST

Avoid contact with poison ivy, mosquitoes and ticks by staying on trails, using insect repellent, wearing light colours, close-toed shoes and long pants tucked into socks.

“Leaflets three, let it be!”

Poison ivy is an important native plant that is common along trail edges. Poison ivy provides food and shelter to small animals and birds living in the forest. For humans, poison ivy can cause skin rashes, severe itching and irritation to those who come into contact with it. Symptoms may develop within 24 to 48 hours of exposure.

If you think you have been in contact with poison ivy:

- Scrub all exposed areas (including pets) with mild soap and cold running water
- Wash affected clothing with soap and water, wearing protective gloves
- If blisters swell or irritation becomes painful, contact your doctor

What does poison ivy look like:



- Three almond-shaped leaflets
- Leaflets have pointed tips, with the middle leaf being the longest
- Leaflets are green, turning darker as they mature and red in the autumn
- Berries tend to be white or cream-coloured

Fight the bite!

Mosquitoes and blacklegged ticks may be found in the York Regional Forest.

West Nile virus is an illness spread through the bite of an infected mosquito.

Lyme disease is spread through the bite of an infected blacklegged tick.

To protect yourself from mosquitoes and ticks, remember to:

- Wear light coloured, long-sleeved shirts or jackets, long pants and socks; pant legs can be tucked into socks for added protection
- Use insect repellent containing DEET when outdoors; always follow the product instructions
- Remove attached ticks as quickly as possible to reduce the spread of Lyme disease

For more information about West Nile virus and Lyme disease, including the safe removal of ticks, contact:

York Region Health Connection

1-800-361-5653

TTY 1-866-512-6288

york.ca/westnile

york.ca/lymedisease



OAK RIDGES TRAIL

The Oak Ridges Moraine is an ecologically sensitive ridge of land which extends approximately 200 kilometres from the Niagara Escarpment to Rice Lake. In York Region it crosses east west through the central part of the Region. Many of our York Regional Forest tracts are located on the Oak Ridges Moraine.

The 275-kilometre trail system found throughout the moraine, was established by the Oak Ridges Trail Association and continues to grow. This trail system can be found within several of the York Regional Forest tracts and is identified on the maps in this guide. Trail markers are successfully maintained through an important long term partnership with the Trail Association. The main Oak Ridge's Trail has white painted markers on tree trunks. Side-trails are marked with blue paint.

Explore the forest with the Oak Ridges Trail Association at one of their free, guided hikes.

More information and an event calendar can be found at oakridgestrail.org

Oak Ridges Trail Markers:



Straight
Ahead



Right
Turn



Left
Turn



Oak Ridge Marker
(end of trail)



The goal for managing the York Regional Forest is:

To ensure the ecological sustainability of the York Regional Forest and its associated natural heritage features and values through the use of ecosystem-based approaches to management, which also recognize social and economic value.

The York Regional Forest is our legacy for future generations.

THE FOREST

The great pine trees were planted between 1920 and 1960 by provincial and county governments to help restore cleared, eroded and sandy farmlands into healthy soil and shade areas welcoming to native trees and plants. Through careful sustainable forest management, the pine plantations enabled the land to be transformed into the forests we see today.

The York Regional Forest is actively managed to ensure the forest stays healthy, the wildlife is protected and the trails can be enjoyed by all users. To maintain the health of the forest, new trees may be planted and older trees may be removed to promote the growth of young trees. This practice, called silvicultural management, ensures the forests will continue to grow and evolve into a diverse woodland.

The York Regional Forest is the first public forest in Canada to be Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) certified by the Rainforest Alliance. To achieve this certification, a forest must be managed according to specific principles and meet criteria for responsible forest management. York Region is internationally recognized as a leader in site-restoration and responsible forest management.



The mark of
responsible forestry



SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

These forests are working demonstration forests. The silvicultural management of trees, which includes thinning and tree planting, is integral to maintaining a healthy forest, promoting biodiversity and increasing the ability of the forest to renew itself. While many of the forest tracts were once pine plantations, all are continually growing and evolving into diverse woodland ecosystems with the help of silvicultural management.

Sustainable harvesting takes the place of natural thinning that occurs when trees die in wind storms or from disease and other natural causes.

We encourage different species of trees and plants and promote biodiversity through varying intensities of thinning and by planting native species.



PROTECT THE FOREST

While enjoying the trails please minimize your impact on the natural environment. Staying on designated trails is an easy way to ensure flowers, mushrooms and trees survive to be appreciated by future generations.

To help protect our forest, please **DO NOT**:

- ✘ Have your dog off leash
- ✘ Light fires
- ✘ Litter
- ✘ Camp overnight
- ✘ Smoke
- ✘ Drive unauthorized vehicles including ATVs, snowmobiles* and dirt bikes
- ✘ Cut or remove trees, plants, mushrooms and fungi or other wildlife

If you enjoy mountain biking, try out the trail network at the Brown Hill Tract (pg. 32).

*Snowmobiles are only permitted on Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs trails in the Pefferlaw Tract (pg. 37).

YORK REGIONAL FOREST ADVISORY TEAM



The York Regional Forest Advisory Team was established in 1994 as a group representing forest users and has provided valuable input into the development of the 20-year Forest Management Plan. Members include representation from a wide variety of stakeholders including recreational user groups, government agencies and naturalists.

The Advisory Team continues to provide input on maintenance and upkeep of the forest. Members also recommend ways to accommodate multiple users and increase public awareness of the forest through initiatives such as events and festivals.



**BILL FISCH
FOREST STEWARDSHIP
& EDUCATION CENTRE**



The award winning Bill Fisch Forest Stewardship and Education Centre represents York Region's commitment to sustainability and environmental education.

Sustainable Design Highlights

- Solar panels and energy efficient design ensure the building produces at least as much energy as it uses
- Water is collected and treated on-site. All of the water needs are met using rainwater and an on-site well
- Carefully directed LED light fixtures reduce the impact on the forest's nocturnal ecosystem
- Local and recycled, low-impact materials used for construction
- Provides a healthy indoor and outdoor environment where humans and nature can thrive together

The Region has achieved Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) Platinum certification and is pursuing the Living Building Challenge (LBC) certification for the building. It has been designed to be fully accessible based on *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* standards.

Recognized for design excellence and innovation in the use of wood, in 2015, the building received the Wood Design award from Ontario Wood Works.

Visit york.ca/yrf for more information about the building.





ON HOLD

NATURE'S CLASSROOM

“Learning about nature is no substitute for learning in nature.”
James Raffan

Nature's Classroom is a fun and informative outdoor education program offered to community groups, schools and organizations. Held in the York Regional Forest, these educational sessions are designed to teach participants about the forest ecosystem and its importance to our community. Each session includes a guided hike.

To receive updates about the Nature's Classroom program, please visit york.ca/naturesclassroom

FOREST EVENTS

Come out and discover the York Regional Forest!

Take a Walk in the Forest

Register for one of the free, guided walks in the York Regional Forest to learn about the forest and its inhabitants.

ON HOLD

Forest Festivals

Meet feathered, furry or scaly forest dwellers at one of the free forest festivals. Join us in the spring and fall to experience a guided hike, tour the Bill Fisch Forest Stewardship and Education Centre and enjoy a variety of outdoor workshops and family activities.

Oak Ridges Trail Association Guided Walks

Discover the beauty of the forest with the Oak Ridges Trail Association at one of their guided walks in the York Regional Forest. To learn more about Oak Ridges Trail Association walks visit oakridgestrail.org

To receive updates about Forest events, visit york.ca/forestevents and register for our Greening e-Newsletter.



LAND PROTECTION

York Region protects priority greenlands through donations, purchases and conservation easements. Hands-on programming is delivered in part through long-standing partnerships with the Nature Conservancy of Canada and the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust.

For more information on how to protect or donate your land, please contact:

Nature Conservancy of Canada

1-877-343-3532 or natureconservancy.ca

Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust

905-853-3171 or oakridgesmoraine.org

York Region Forestry

1-877-464-9675 or greening@york.ca



ADD NEW LIFE TO YOUR PROPERTY

Planting a tree or many trees on your property can improve the look of your yard, reduce your stress and improve your health and creativity.

Whether you want to plant your own trees or have us do the planting for you, there are low-cost tree planting programs available for every size of property in York Region.

Fall in love with your property again.

york.ca/loveyouryard

Tree planting programs are offered in partnership with Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority and the Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests Organization (LEAF).





LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAVE

Stop the spread of invasive species

Invasive species are defined as harmful alien species whose introduction and spread threatens the health of their new area by competing with native plants and animals for food and habitat.



Invasive species can unknowingly be carried by mud on shoes, bikes, motorized vehicles, clothing and pets.

All forest users can help prevent the spread of invasive species by cleaning their clothing, pets and their vehicles before leaving the Forest.

Bikers: Clean your bike with a gentle brush before and after rides.

Walkers or Runners: Brush the bottoms of your shoes, pants and clothes before entering and exiting the forest.

Horse Riders and Dog Walkers: Brush off your animal's feet and coat before entering and leaving the forest.

To learn more about common invasive plants in the York Regional Forest and Ontario, visit ontarioinvasiveplants.ca

To help track the spread of invasive species in Ontario and view or report sightings in the York Regional Forest or your neighbourhood, visit eddmaps.org/ontario

York Regional Forest Tracts

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Page 42 | Davis Drive Tract

Page 43 | Drysdale Tract

Page 44 | Eldred King Tract

Page 45 | Hall Tract

Page 46 | Hollidge Tract

Page 47 | Mitchell Tract

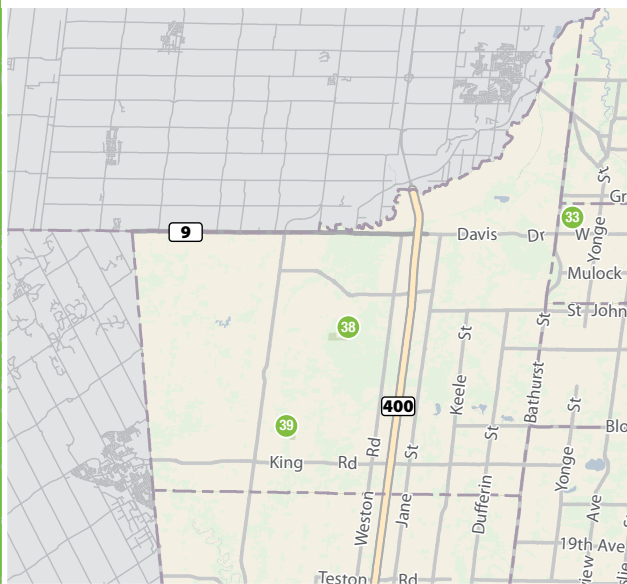
Page 48 | North Tract

Page 49 | Patterson Tract

Page 50 | Porritt Tract

Page 51 | Robinson Tract

Page 52 | Scout Tract





THE TRAILS

















Between the tall pines of the forest are trails, trees, wildlife and water just waiting for you. Engage your senses, improve your health and spend some quality time walking, horseback riding, biking or snowshoeing along the maintained trails. Trails vary from sandy or dirt paths to woody, debris-covered forest floor.

Accessible trails are located in Hollidge Tract, North Tract and Hall Tract. These trails have been widened, cleared of obstructions and graded to ensure ease-of-movement for all visitors including those using wheelchairs and other assistive devices.

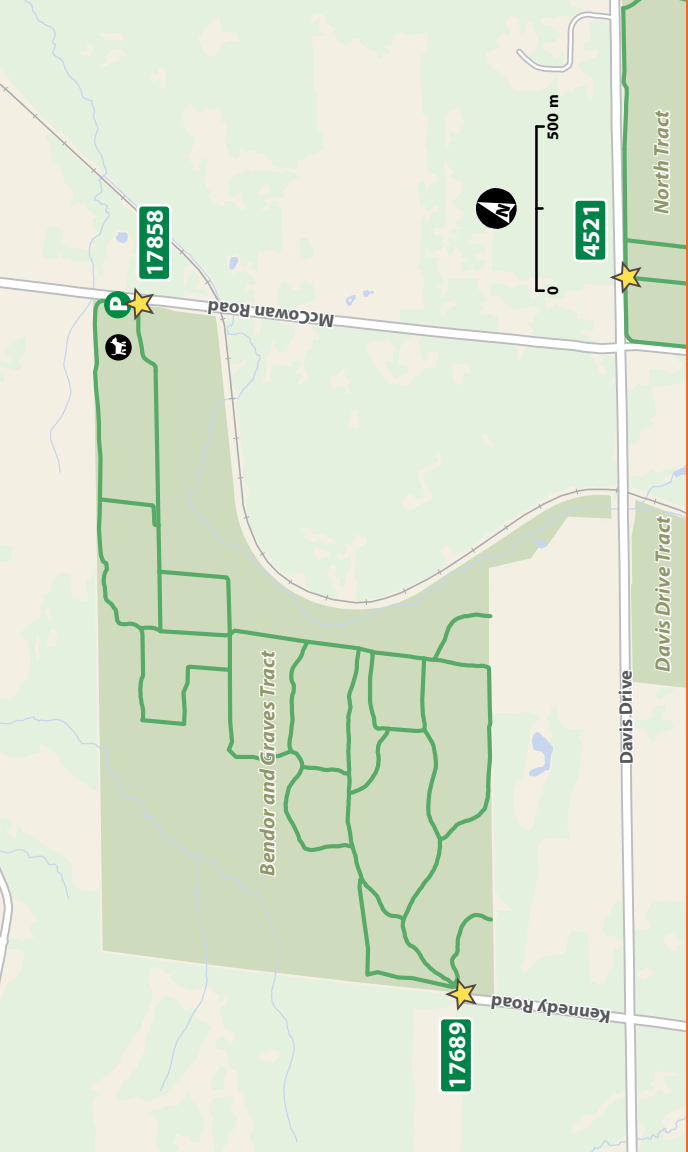
The trails of the York Regional Forest are managed by York Region staff, with input and assistance from the Regional Forest Advisory Team.

All trails and forest tracts are to be used at your own risk.

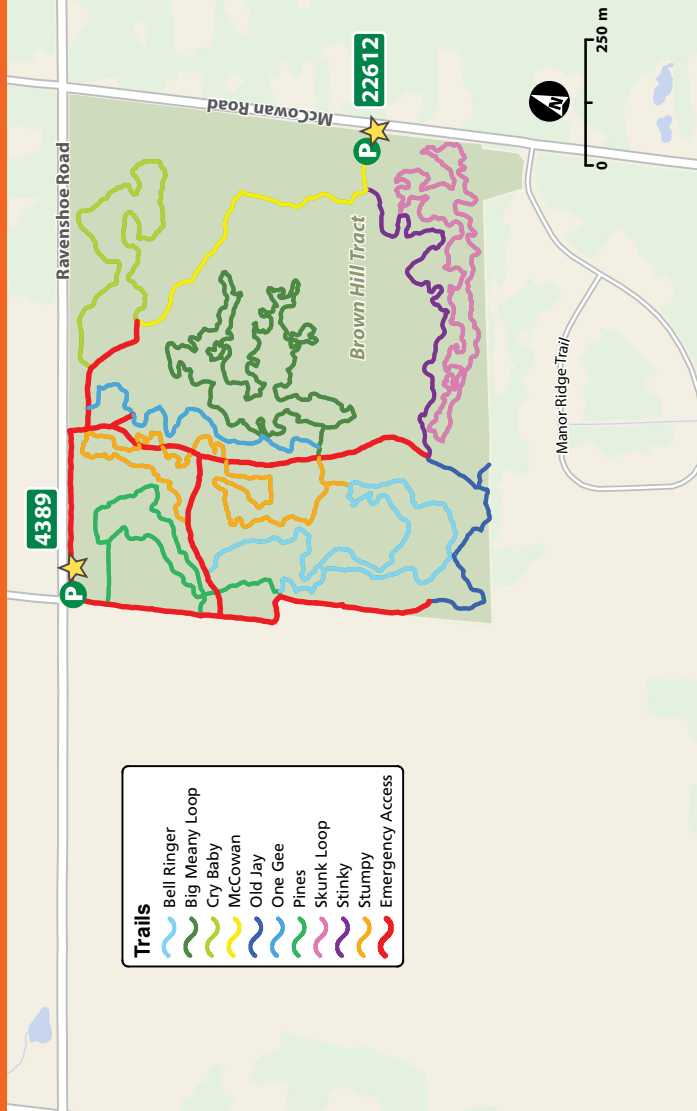
Trail Map Legend

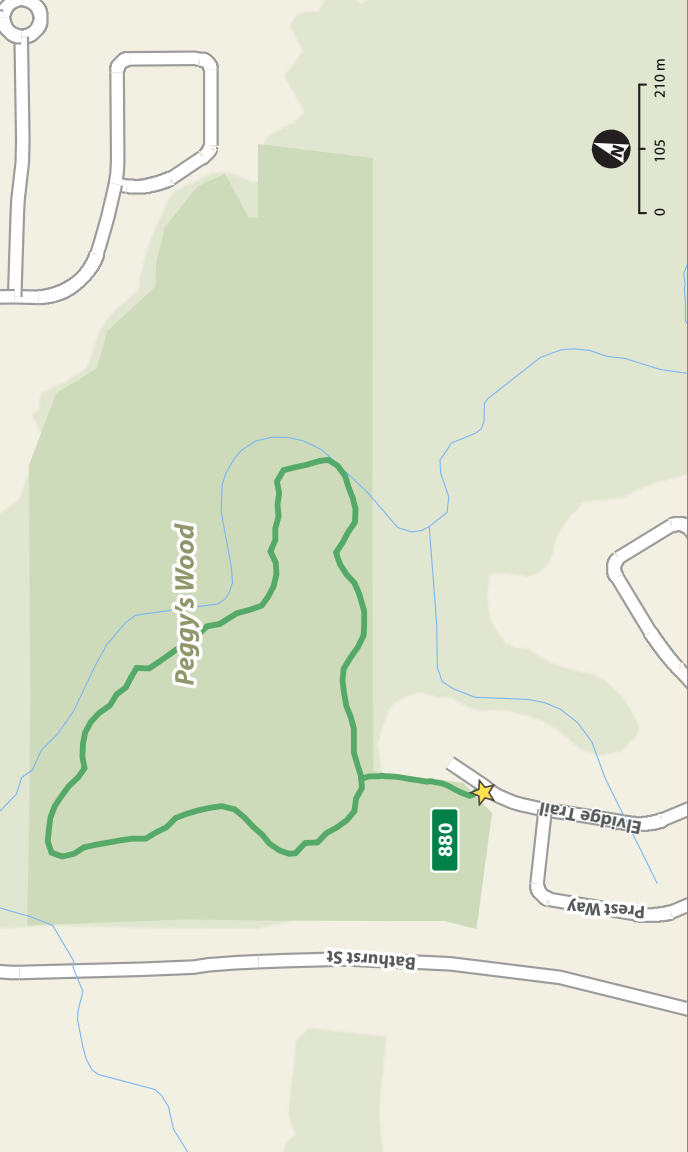
	Trail		Dog Off Leash Area
	Accessible Trail		Road
	Oak Ridges Trail*		Railway
	Oak Ridges Side Trail*		River
	Parking		Lake
	Accessible Trail		Regional Forest Area
	Access Address Number		Conservation Area
	Pedestrian Access		Wooded Area

*see page 14 for more information on Oak Ridges Trail



Bendor and Graves Tract | 17858 McCowan Road, Town of East Gwillimbury | 181 ha.





Peggy's Wood

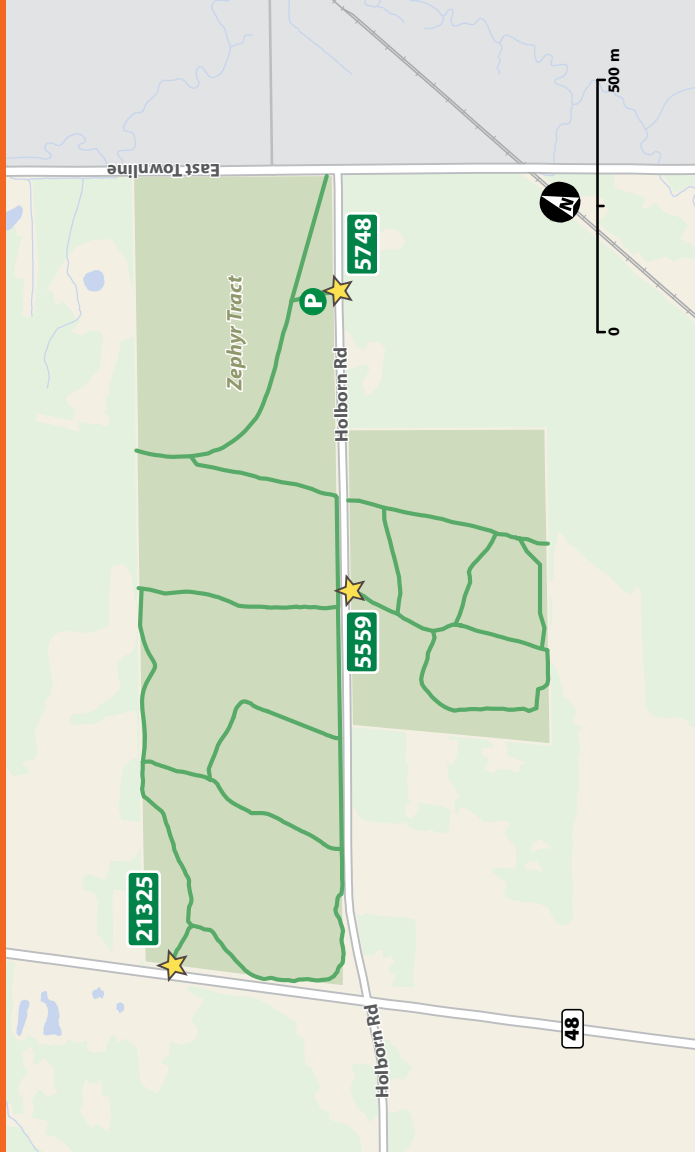
880

Bathurst St

Elvidge Trail

Prest Way

Peggy's Wood | 880 Elvidge Trail, Town of East Gwillimbury | 19.2 ha.



Holborn Rd

Holborn Rd

East Townline

Zephyr Tract

21325

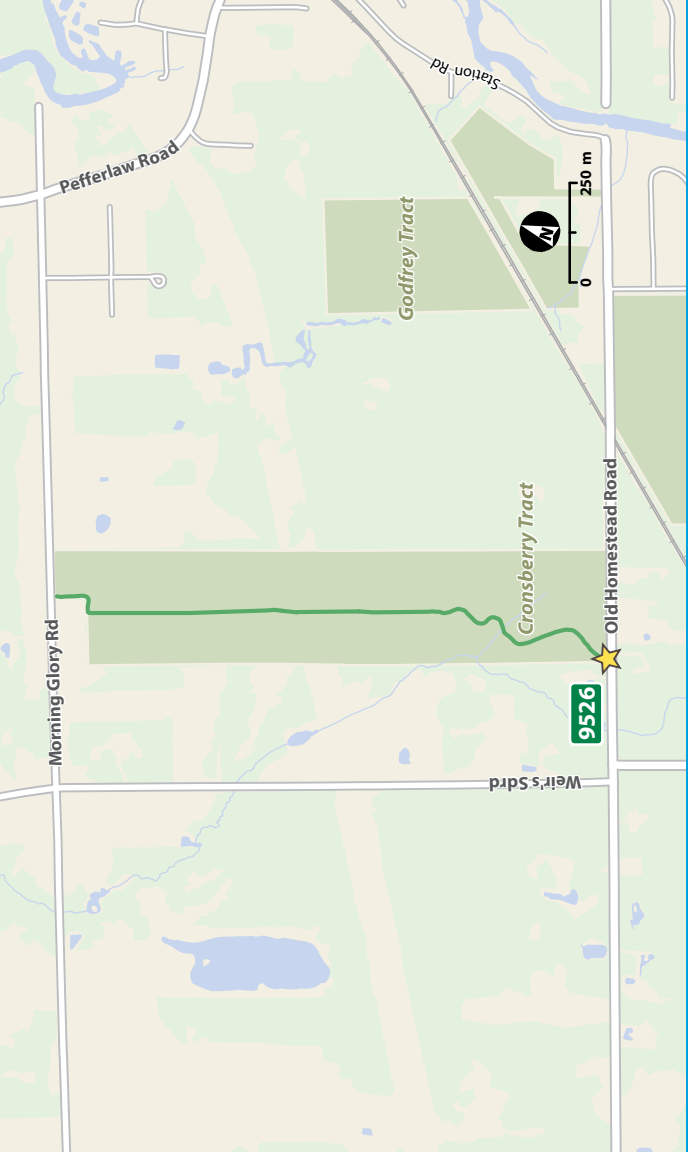
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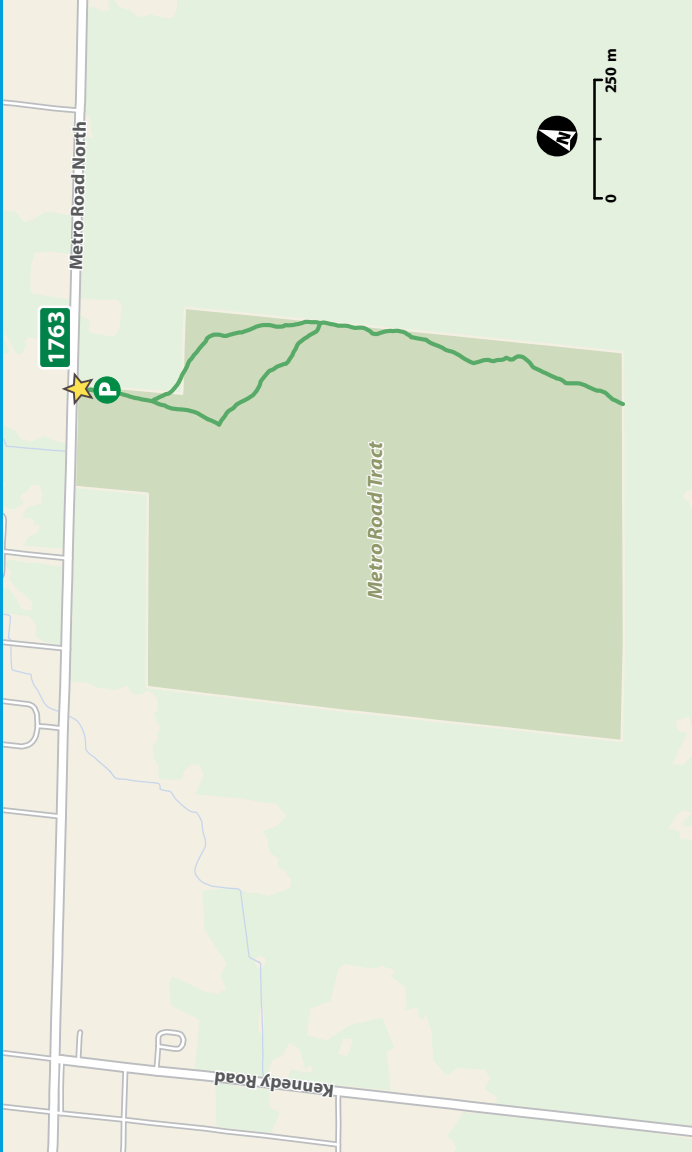
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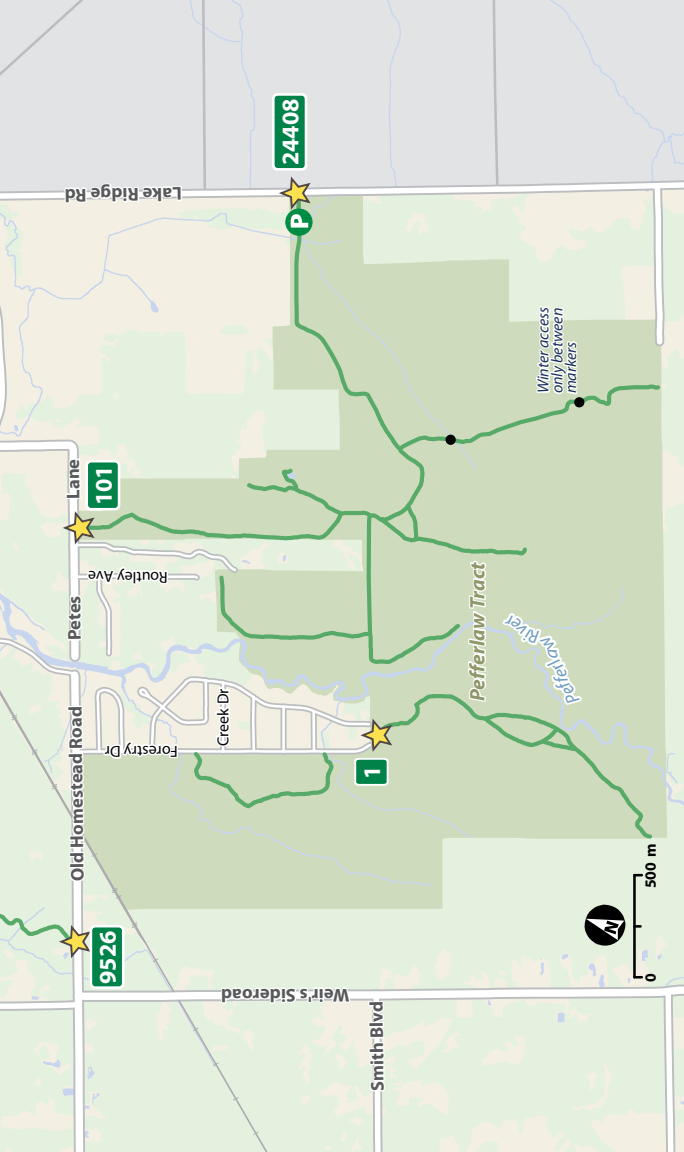
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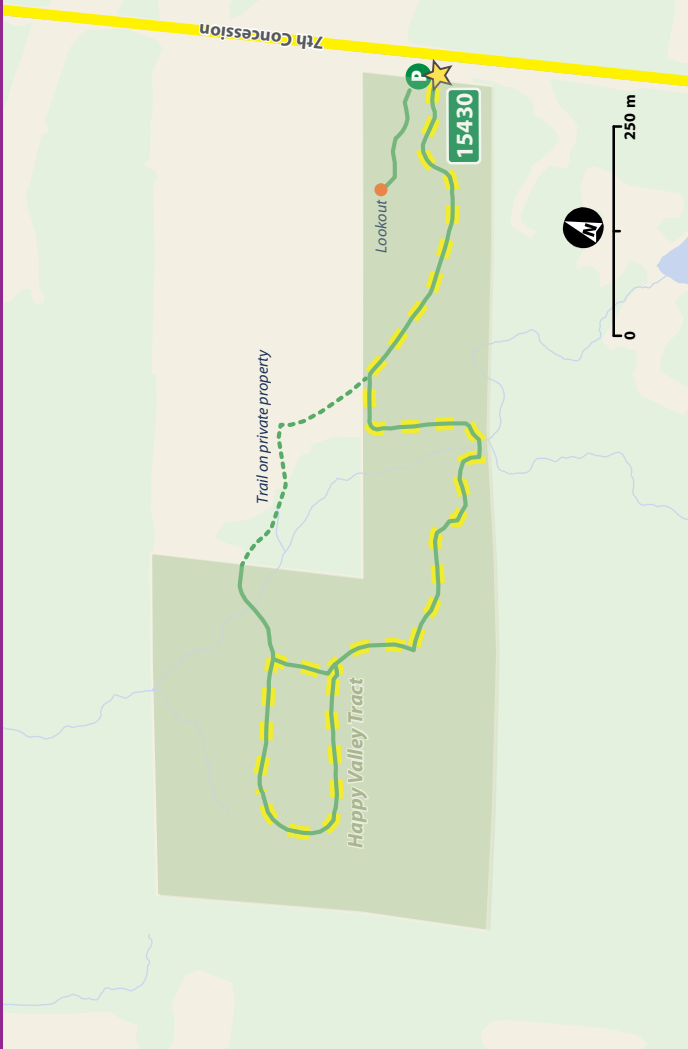


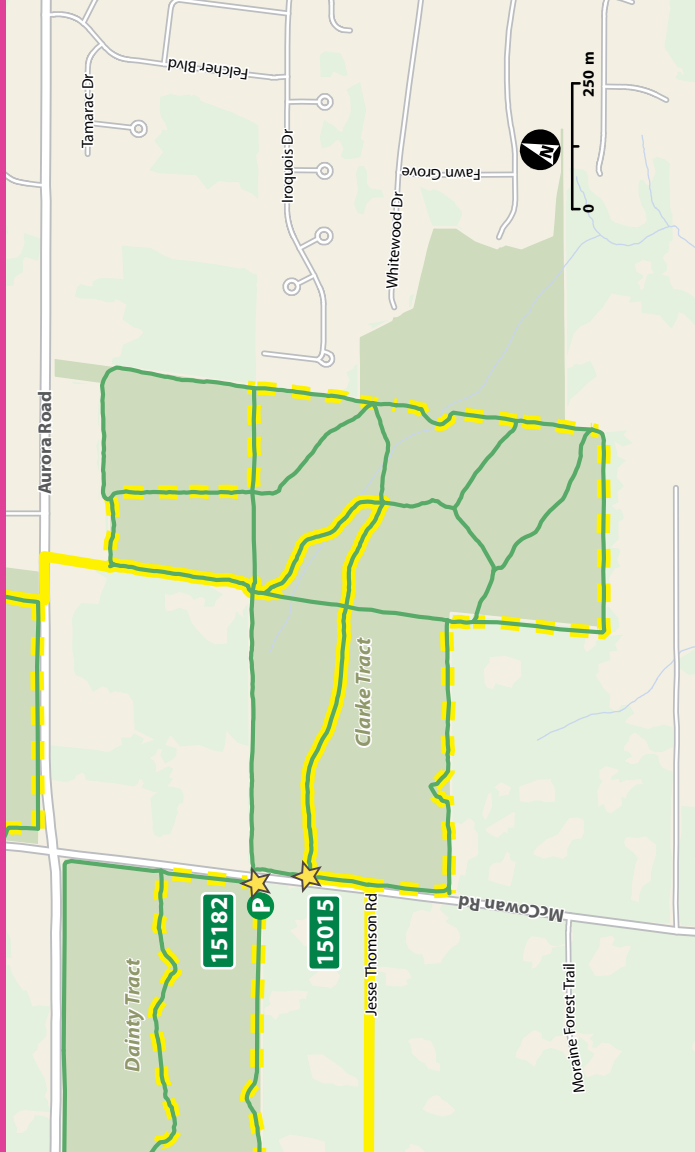


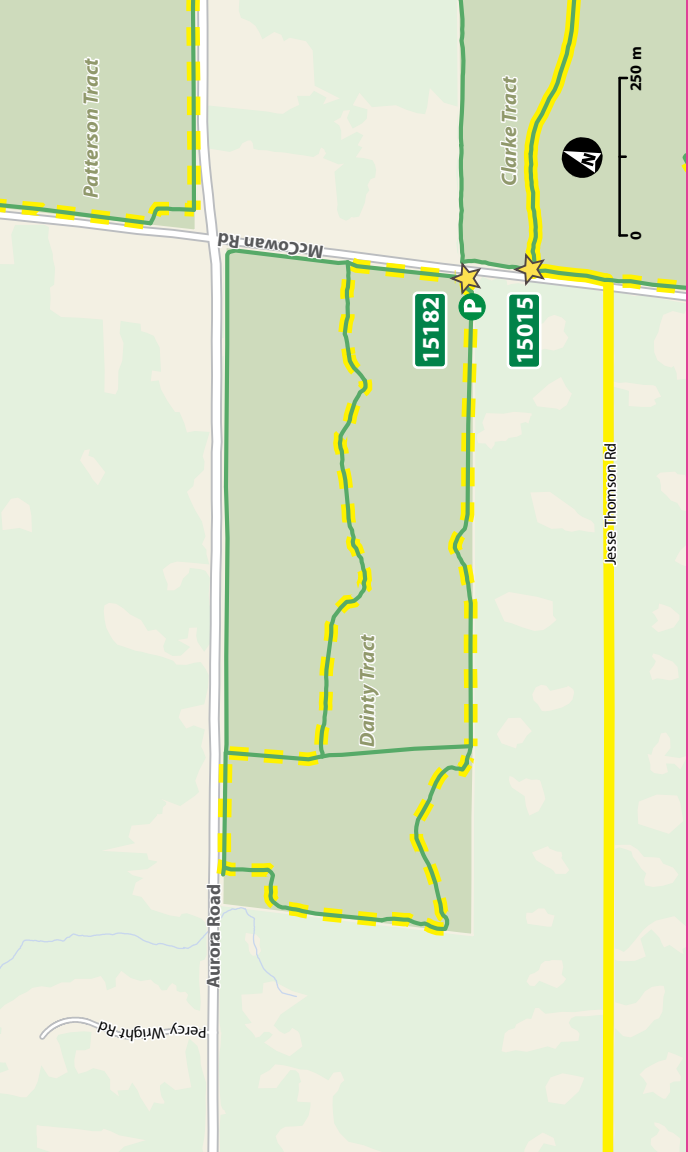




Pefferlaw Tract | 24408 Lake Ridge Road, Town of Georgina | 581.1 ha.

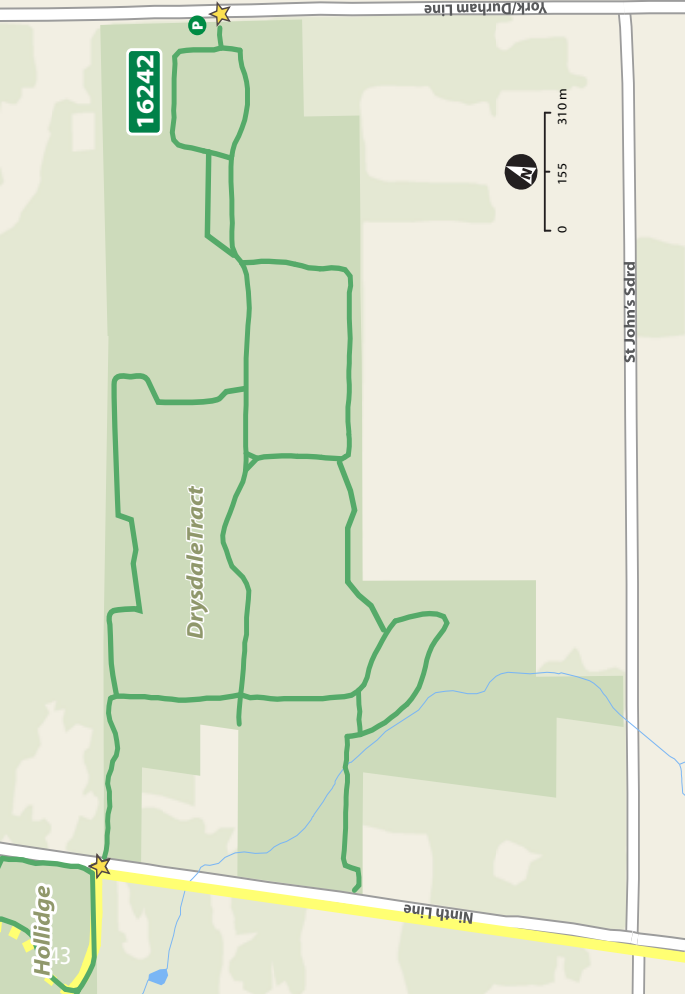




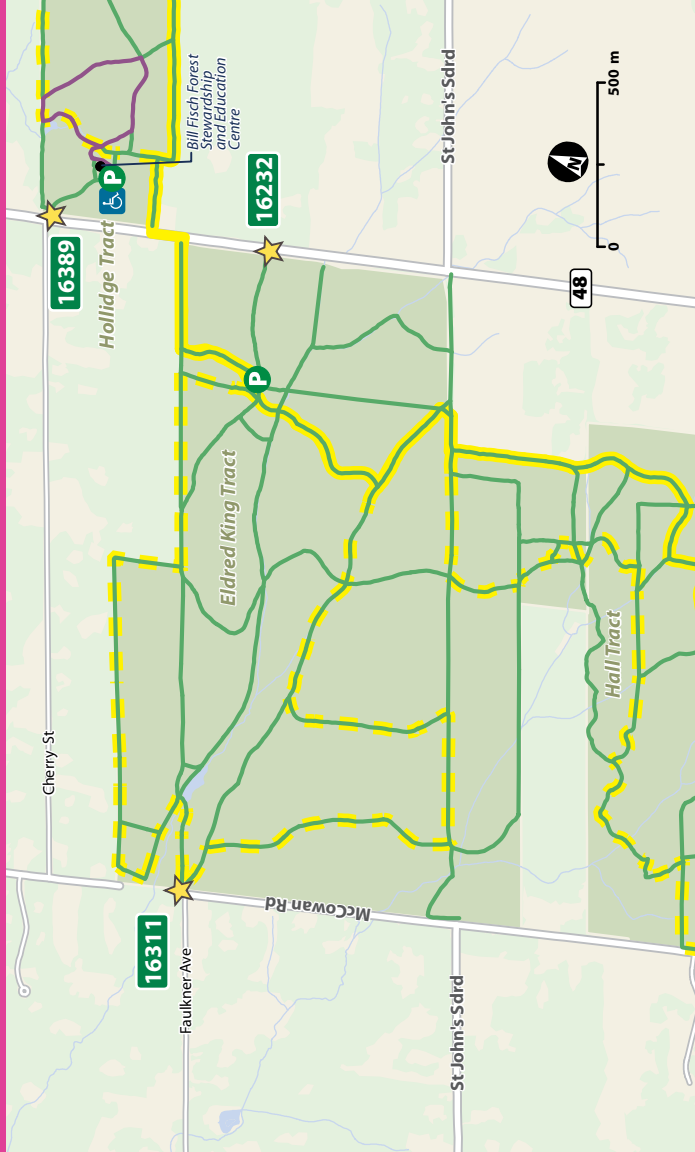


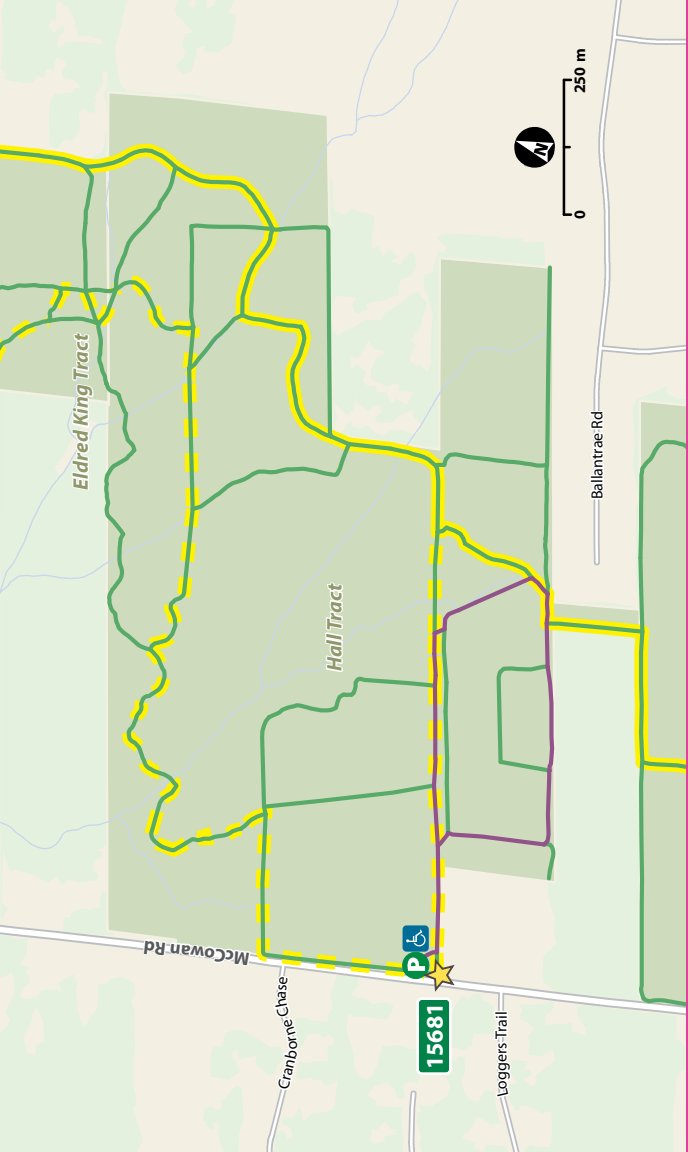
Dainty Tract | 15182 McCowan Road, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville | 41.4 ha.



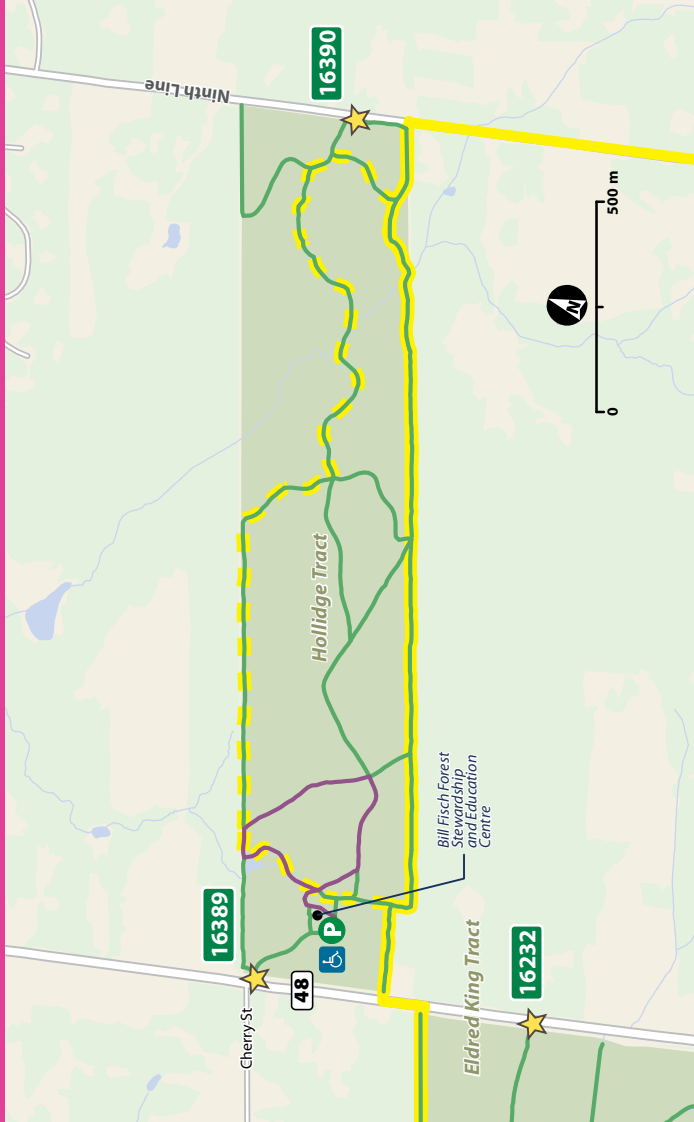


Drysdale Tract | 16242 York /Durham Line, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville | 55.1 ha.



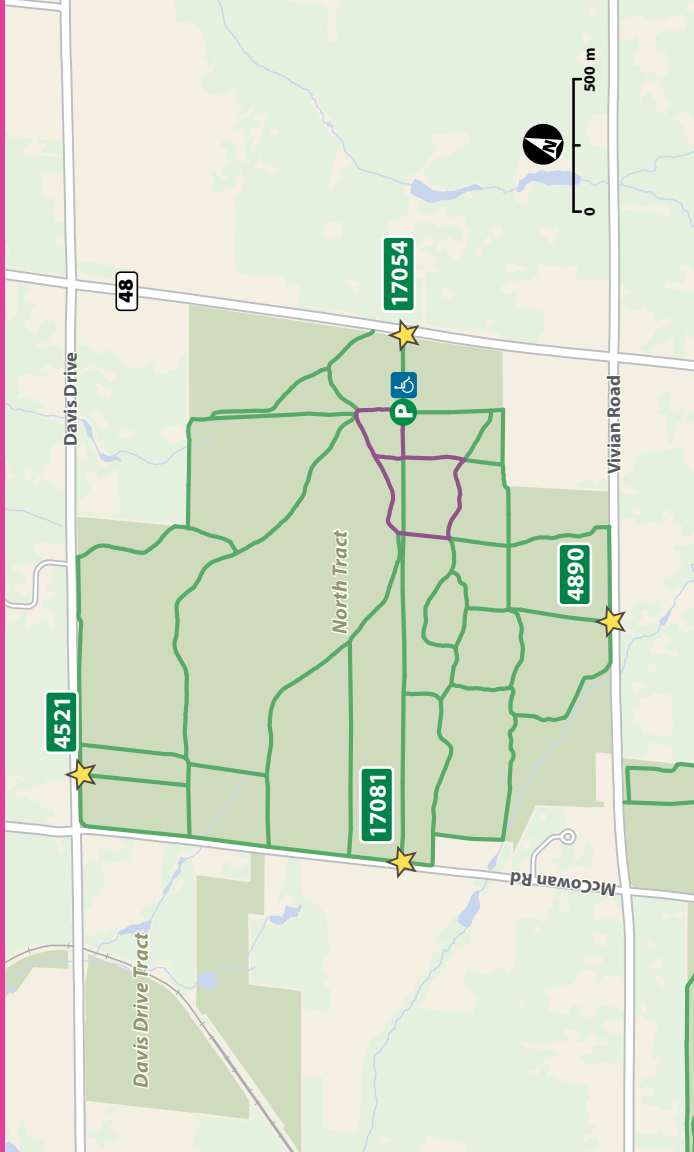


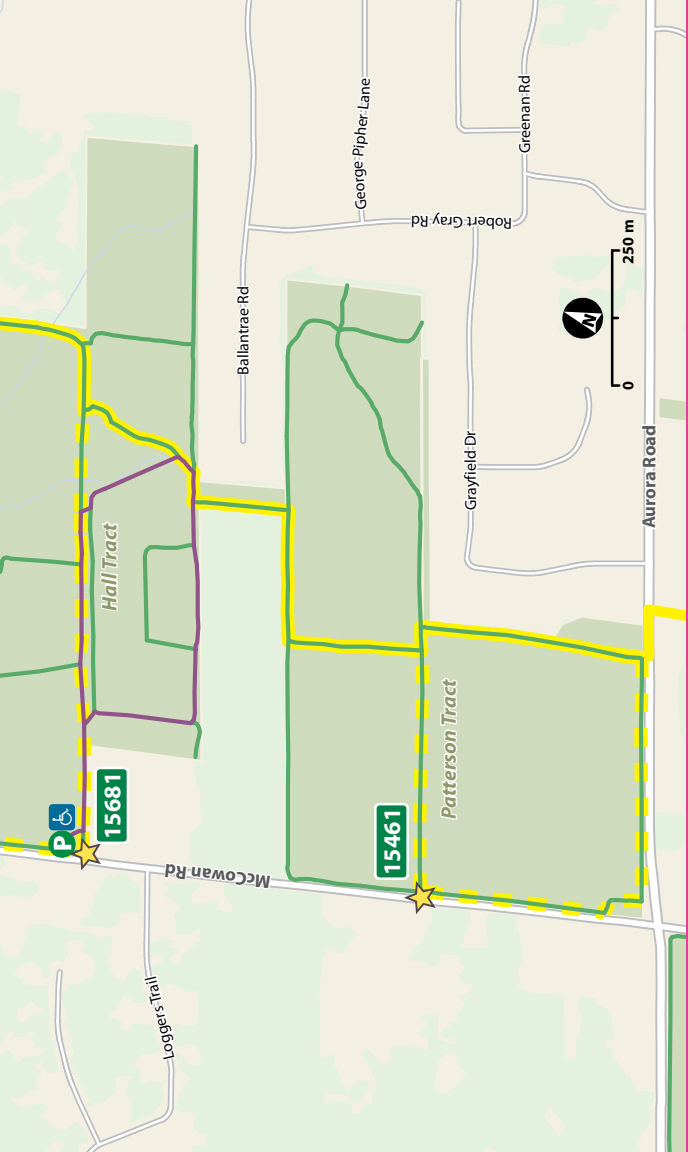
Hall Tract | 15681 McCowan Road, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville | 109.2 ha.



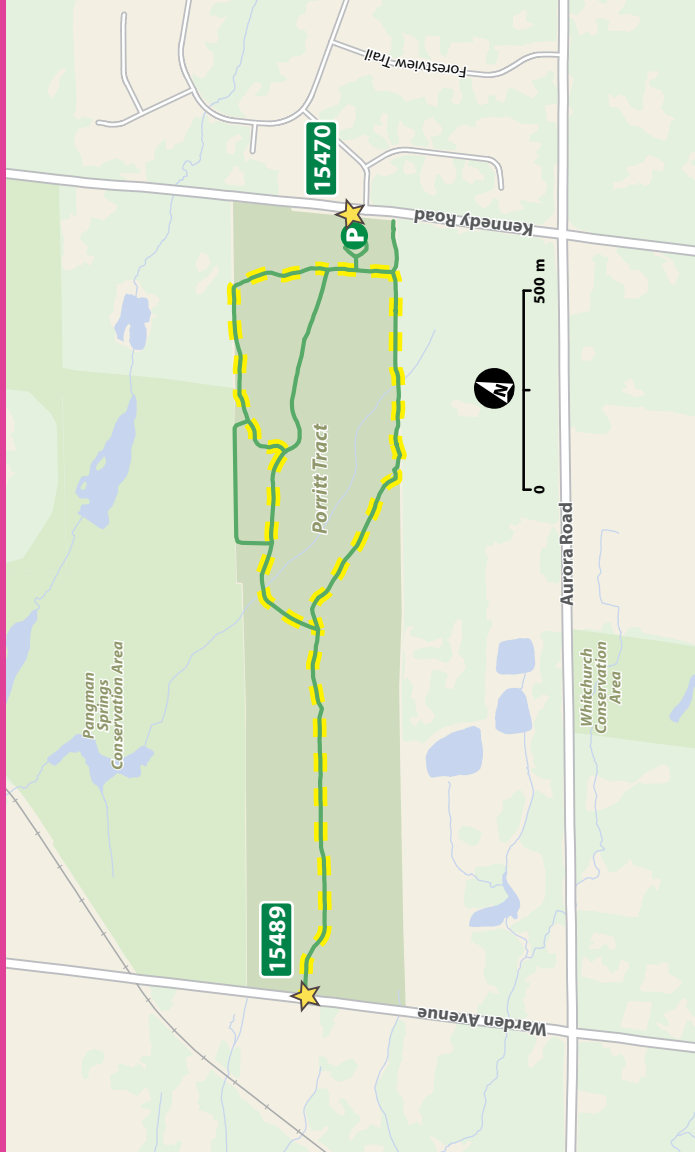


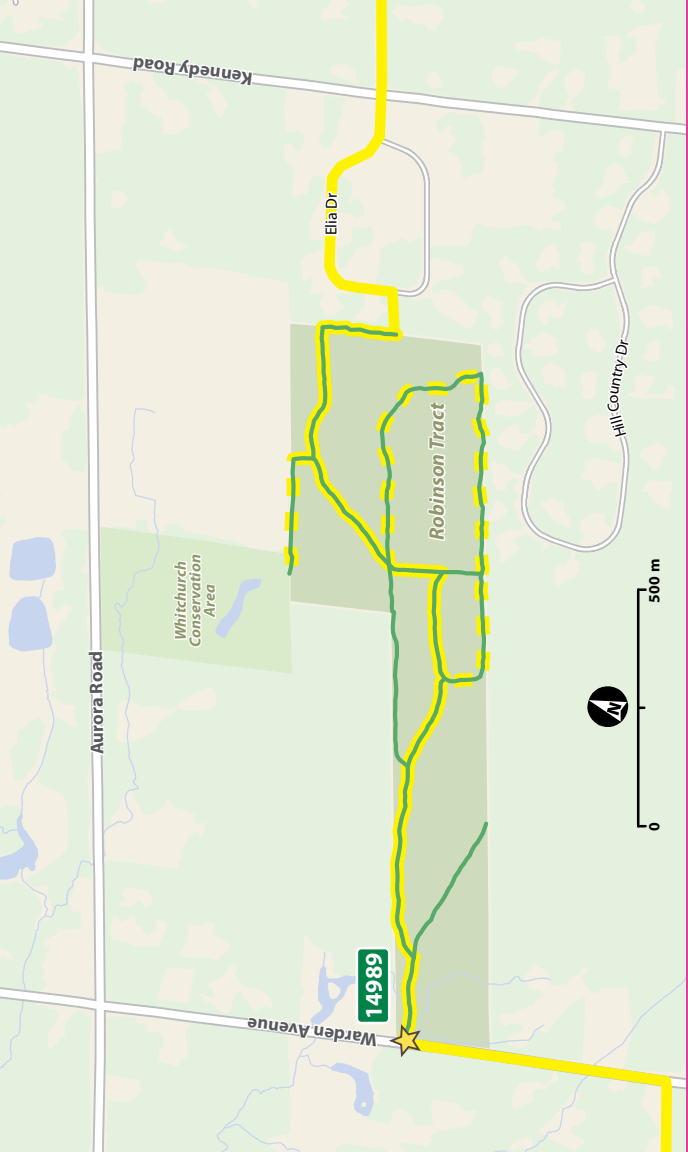
Mitchell Tract | 4677 Vivian Road, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville | 20.9 ha.



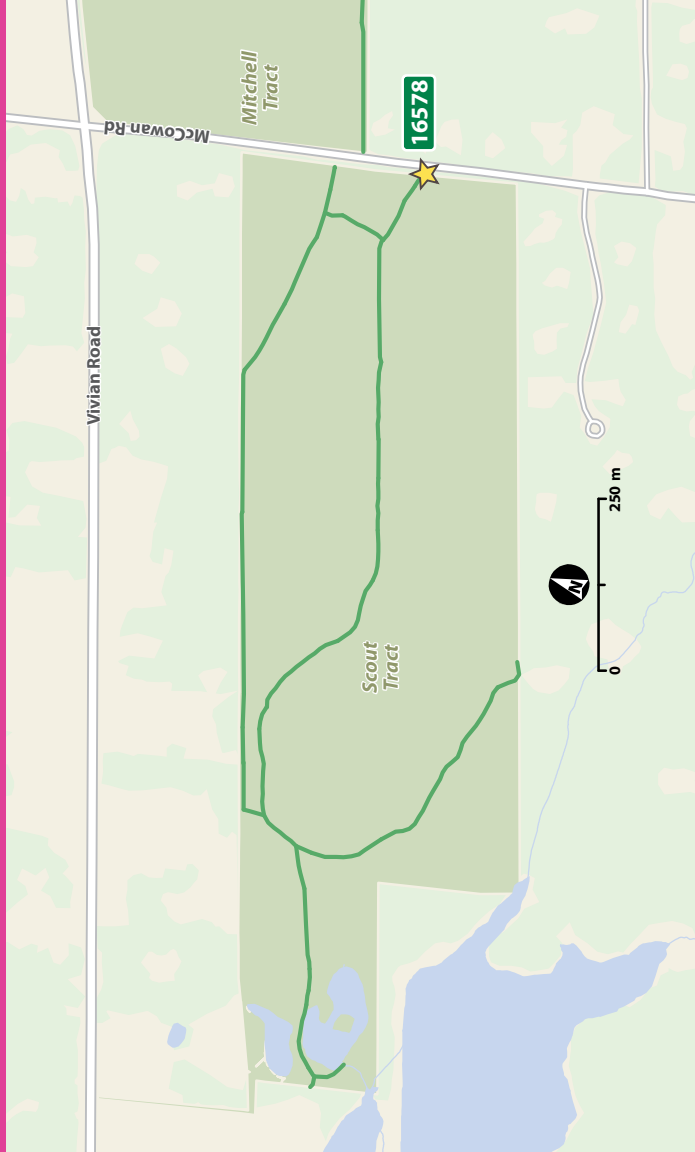


Patterson Tract | 15461 McCowan Road, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville | 50 ha.





Robinson Tract | 14989 Warden Avenue, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville | 42.7 ha.







TIME SPENT
AMONGST
THE TREES IS
NEVER TIME
WASTED



100% RECYCLED PAPER

FSC logo

york.ca/forestry