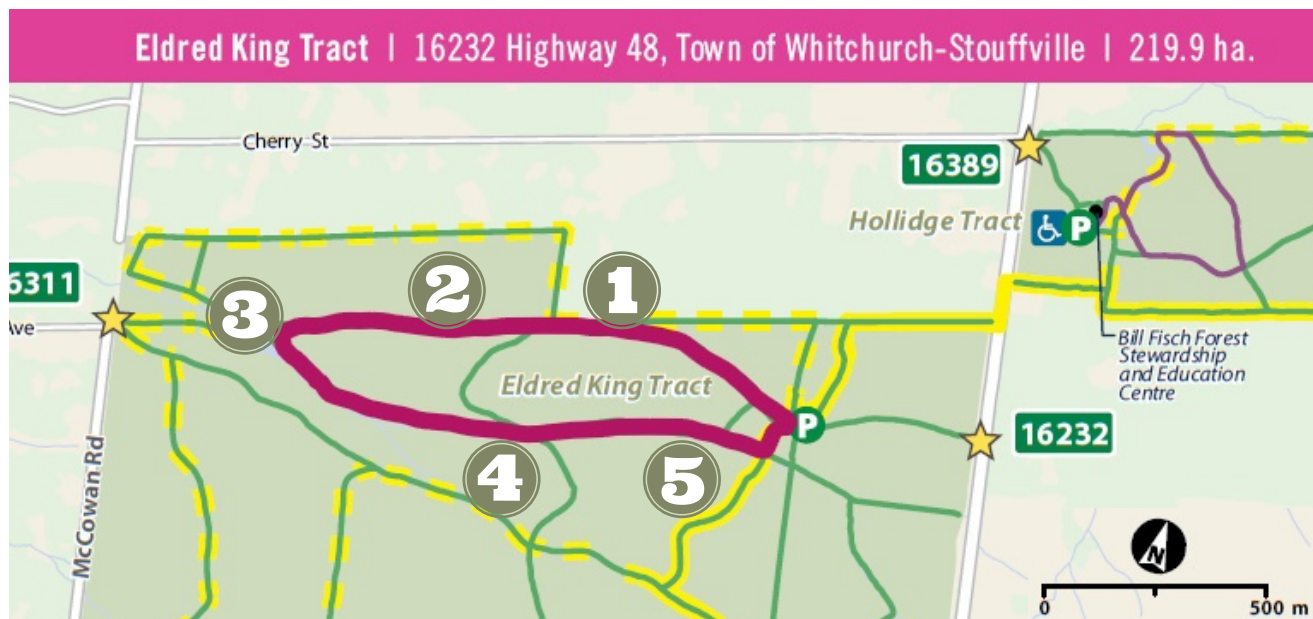


2021 National Forest Week

Virtual Guided Hike

Welcome to the **Eldred King Tract**, one of the most popular forests in the York Regional Forest. This activity kit is to be used along with the Virtual Guided Hike. If you've never hiked in the York Regional Forest, this is a GREAT starting point!

Before heading out, watch the video [here](#) and prepare yourself using the list below. Don't forget to download your own [map of the York Regional Forest](#)!



Stops

- Parking Lot: Introduction/Conclusion
- 1. History and Maps
- 2. Oak Ridges Moraine
- 3. Wildlife Diversity
- 4. Forest Management and Dynamics
- 5. Invasive Species

What to bring

- Water bottle
- Good walking shoes
- Map
- Activities (printed)
- Pen or pencil
- Cell phone (optional)



Before hiking, it is important to note the potential hazards you may encounter on the trail, including **poison ivy** and **ticks**. Poison ivy is addressed in the Virtual Guided Hike Video.

Ticks are small bugs that feed off the blood of humans and animals. The nymphs are about the size of a poppy seed, while adults are about the size of a sesame seed. Most tick bites are painless, making them difficult to find if you are not looking for them.

Blacklegged ticks can be found on tall grasses and bushes in wooded areas almost anywhere in Ontario, and can carry Lyme disease. For more information, go to the [**York Region page on Lyme disease**](#).

Tick Safety Tips

- Wear light-coloured long pants and long-sleeved shirts.
- Wear close-toes shoes and long socks that your pants can be tucked into.
- Walk in the middle of the trail while hiking.
- Shower when you get home to remove unattached ticks
- Check yourself, your family, and your pets for ticks when you get home.
- Remove attached ticks as soon as possible.

If you find a tick, remove it quickly!

- Grasp the tick with tweezers as close to the skin as possible, pulling straight out. Do **not** put anything on the tick.
- Disinfect the area with rubbing alcohol.
- Visit [**etick.ca**](http://etick.ca) for more information on ticks, and a guide to identifying them.



Stop 1: History and Maps

While hiking through this forest, you may already notice some trees planted in rows. These plantations of red pines were planted at various points in history, with some of the oldest plantations established in 1924. These plantations are managed by York Region and as such, most of the trails are actually *access roads* used for forest management.

Maps are vital for finding your way in a forest like the Eldred King Tract, with a collection of small trails. They not only provide a sense of where you are and where you're going, but they can also let you explore other trails without worry of getting lost.

Activity: Scavenger Hunt

Use the scavenger hunt on the following page as you travel from stop to stop, and take a look on the ground around the trail. Don't travel off the trail, and be mindful of poison ivy!

SCAVENGER HUNT

Our forests are beautiful—so be gentle as you walk through them. If you are collecting any of the items below, make sure that they have already fallen on the ground. For those items that are not on the ground, just observe and check off that you've found them. Let the searching begin!

ACORN	LEAF	FLOWERS	TWIG
BARK	SEED	NEEDLE	CONE
MUSHROOM	SOIL	MOSS	BRANCH
TRUNK	FEATHER	ROCK	BUD

Focus on Forests is Canada's leading forest education program that engages youth and educators in learning more about our forests. Focus on Forests is a program of Forests Ontario.

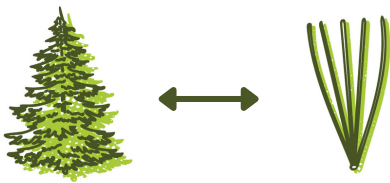


For more information and to access more great activities visit www.focusonforests.ca

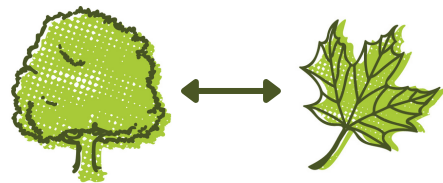
Stop 2: Oak Ridges Moraine & Species Diversity

This forest – and all of the surrounding forests – are a part of the Oak Ridges Moraine. This is a large land form that covers 1900 square kilometers. There are many different *ecosystems*, or communities of living and non-living things such as plants, animals, water, and soil, that can be found within this area. Ecosystems found in the moraine include woodlands, wetlands, and bogs.

The moraine contains *mixed forests*, with both *coniferous trees*, or evergreen trees, and *deciduous trees*, or broad-leaved trees.



Coniferous trees have needles that stay on the tree year-round



Deciduous trees have broad, flat leaves that turn colour in the fall

Activity: Tree Studies

Look at two different trees while walking from stop 2 to stop 3. Compare the two, and answer the following:

1. Which has smoother bark?
2. What kinds of leaves do the trees have - needles, or broad leaves?
3. Describe and/or draw the two different leaves in the space below.

BONUS

Keep an eye out for different types of leaves using **LEAFO bingo** and see how many you can check off on this hike!

Stop 3: Wildlife Diversity

The 3rd stop on this hike is right at the Eldred King Pond, and is the turning point of the hike. This pond is a great spot to find all sorts of wildlife, from birds to toads and turtles to insects like crickets and dragonflies. If you look in the water, you might even see some fish!

Activity: Soundscape

Close your eyes, and let the sounds of the pond and surrounding forest wash over you. What do you hear? Take a few minutes to absorb the sounds of the forest around you, and write down what you hear or feel, or draw whatever catches your eye.

BONUS

Record your soundscape on your phone at share it with us on social media!

Instagram: [@Forests_Ontario](#)

Twitter: [@Forests_Ontario](#)

Instagram: [@yorkregiongovt](#)

Twitter: [@YorkRegionGovt](#)

Stop 4: Forest Dynamics and Management

Forests are dynamic environments, always changing, and forest management can be a part of that. Forest management can include harvesting trees, which is often designed to mimic natural disturbances. Thinning out red pine plantations, for example, not only encourages other red pines to grow into the newly exposed patches of canopy, but promotes the growth of understory trees, those growing beneath the canopy.

Activity: Forest Study

Part 1: Stumped?

Take a look at the forest around the trail and find a tree stump. Without leaving the trail, answer these questions:

How wide is the stump compared to the tree trunks surrounding it?

Look up. Is there still a gap in the canopy above? Is it bigger or smaller than the tops of nearby trees?

Is there anything growing on the stump? Why is it growing there?

Part 2: Tree Identification

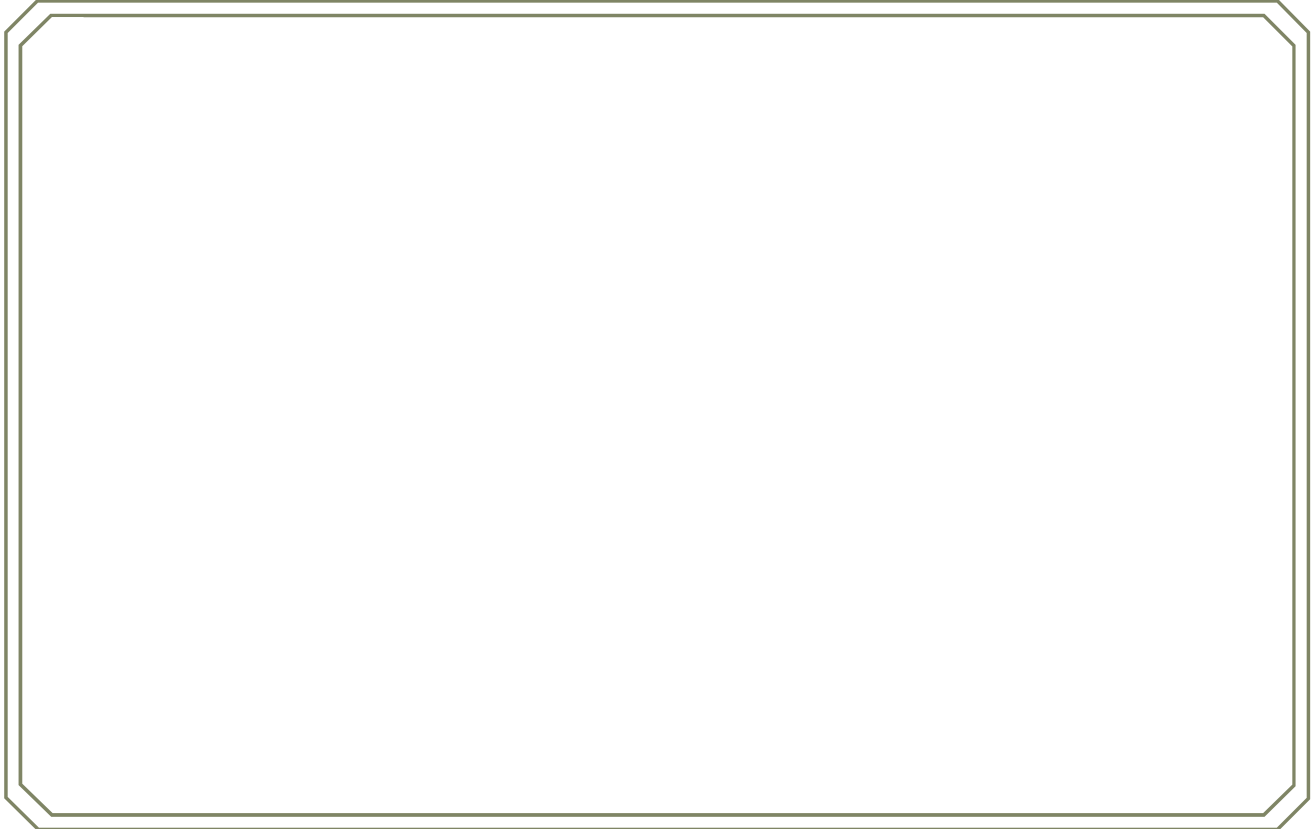
In this part of the forest, you can see lots of understory trees growing beneath the larger, well-established trees that spread up to the canopy. While staying on the trail, figure out what species these understory trees are by printing off the [Tree Bee pocket tree identification guide](#) and following the flow chart. Write down some of the species names below!



Stop 5: Invasive Species

DOG-STRANGLING VINE

Aliases: *Vincetoxicum rossicum*, Pale Swallowwort,



Crime: Native to Eurasia, this invasive plant was introduced to North America as a garden plant. Since its introduction to Ontario in the late 1800s, dense patches of Dog-strangling Vine have been strangling native plants in forests, preventing forest regeneration and impeding management activities. The leaves and roots of this plant may also be toxic to livestock.

Known Hangouts: Dog-strangling Vine prefers open, sunny areas, but can grow well in light shade. The thick mats of this plant can be found in fields, forests, roadsides, and stream banks, among other locations. This aggressive plant can grow up to two meters high, and produce thousands of seeds that can be carried on the wind. It can also regrow from root fragments, making it difficult to remove.

KEEP OUT: Check your shoes, bike tires, and clothing for any hitchhiking seeds or crushed vegetation to prevent the spread of invasive plants!