

# a WINTER HIKE in the Pangman-Porritt

by David Tuley



A combination of Pangman Springs and Porritt Tract provides the perfect venue for a quick forest walk. Pangman Springs is one of two conservation areas in Whitchurch-Stouffville that is owned and managed by Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, while Porritt Tract is one of eleven W-S public forests owned and managed by York Regional Forest.

Located just north of Aurora Rd. & Kennedy Rd., both forests have formal parking areas, although Pangman's parking area is small and is easy to miss. Pangman is a straight trail, connecting Kennedy Rd. to the centre of loop trails inside Porritt.

It was a steel grey January day. The temperature was a mild -1 c. The dog and I drove passed the Pangman parking lot and had to circle back. The lot is at the bottom of a big hill on Kennedy. Pangman is less traveled - it was noon and there was only one set of human tracks in the fresh snow. Pangman is a double-track trail - not too wide or narrow. The trail is listed as "easy", but I was huffing by the time I climbed the first hill, which rose about 50 feet before leveling off.

In the distance, trains can be heard traveling from Toronto to Huntsville and beyond. The trail has boardwalk sections over wetlands and a wide, sandy bottomed, clear water creek. This unnamed creek eventually meets up with the main branch East Holland River in Newmarket.

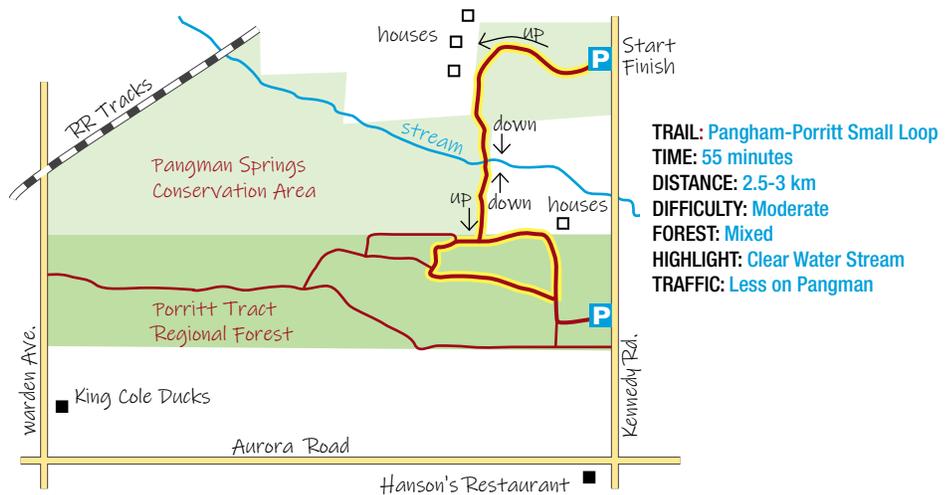
The Pangman trail intersects with trails in the Porritt Tract with little fanfare - not even a sign to state that you have crossed a border. I had some maps on my phone, but I didn't bother the check, as I knew I was making a counter clock lollipop shape, with Pangman being the stick and Porritt offering the loop.

Several trails peeled off to the right, one presumably leading all the way to Warden Ave. Porritt attracts more hikers, as there were many tracks in the snow, including a cross country skier. The trails here are quite wide and the slopes more gentle.

After completing the short loop on Porritt, the Pangman trail could be clearly seen descending to a boardwalk. The walk back, being mostly downhill, was much faster. I was back in the parking lot before a whole hour had elapsed - 55 minutes to be exact.

Both forests alternated between hardwoods and evergreen trees. The only evidence I saw of "wildlife" was squirrel footprints in the snow. As for humans, a few backyards could be seen along Pangman, and a couple in Porritt; otherwise, it was quiet.

The location of these trails is ideal, being a two-minute drive from Hanson's Restaurant for unwinding with Chinese and Italian food. It is also within a kilometer of King Cole Ducks to the west, or a couple of kilometers from the Joyous Light Candles store at Holy Theotokos Convent to the east. [1]



PHOTOS from the top: (1) Trail entrance to Pangman Springs Conservation Area. (2) Pools of snow melt along the trail edge. (3) Lone footprints in the snow displays the total traffic this day. (4) Boardwalk over a branch of the East Holland River. (5) The wider trails of Porritt Tract where another hiker is spotted in the distance.