

ITINERARIES

Hollidge Tract

Hollidge Tract has 8 km of trails. It is mostly flat terrain with a few hills, a beautiful trout stream, and some marshy areas with boardwalks. Parking is available right off Highway 48. It is a well-used forest, but certainly not crowded. There are enough crisscrossing trails that it is possible to get lost if not paying attention. Plan a half day here.

Dainty and Clarke Tracts

Together, Dainty & Clarke have 11.5 km of trails. These tracts are good place to watch a hardwood forest grow and evolve. Ailing pines were removed and replaced with hardwoods in 1985. Make a wide loop in each tract, together making a 7.9 km hike. This mostly flat hike is good for families. These tracts are less well-known, and therefore a bit more secluded. Plan on 2.5-3.5 hours depending upon pace. A parking lot is located along McCowan at Dainty Tract.

Eldred King Tract

Eldred King is popular, but it's big - 18 km of trails total. If you have a friendly dog, park by the road and enter from McCowan - the lovely "dog pond" is a short walk away. If dogs are not preferred, enter from the parking lot off Highway 48. Bring a good map and make up your itinerary as you go. Make sure not to accidentally walk south into Hall Tract and become disoriented. Eldred King is one of the older forest tracts, so expect large pines mixed with newer hardwoods.

Scout and Mitchell Tracts

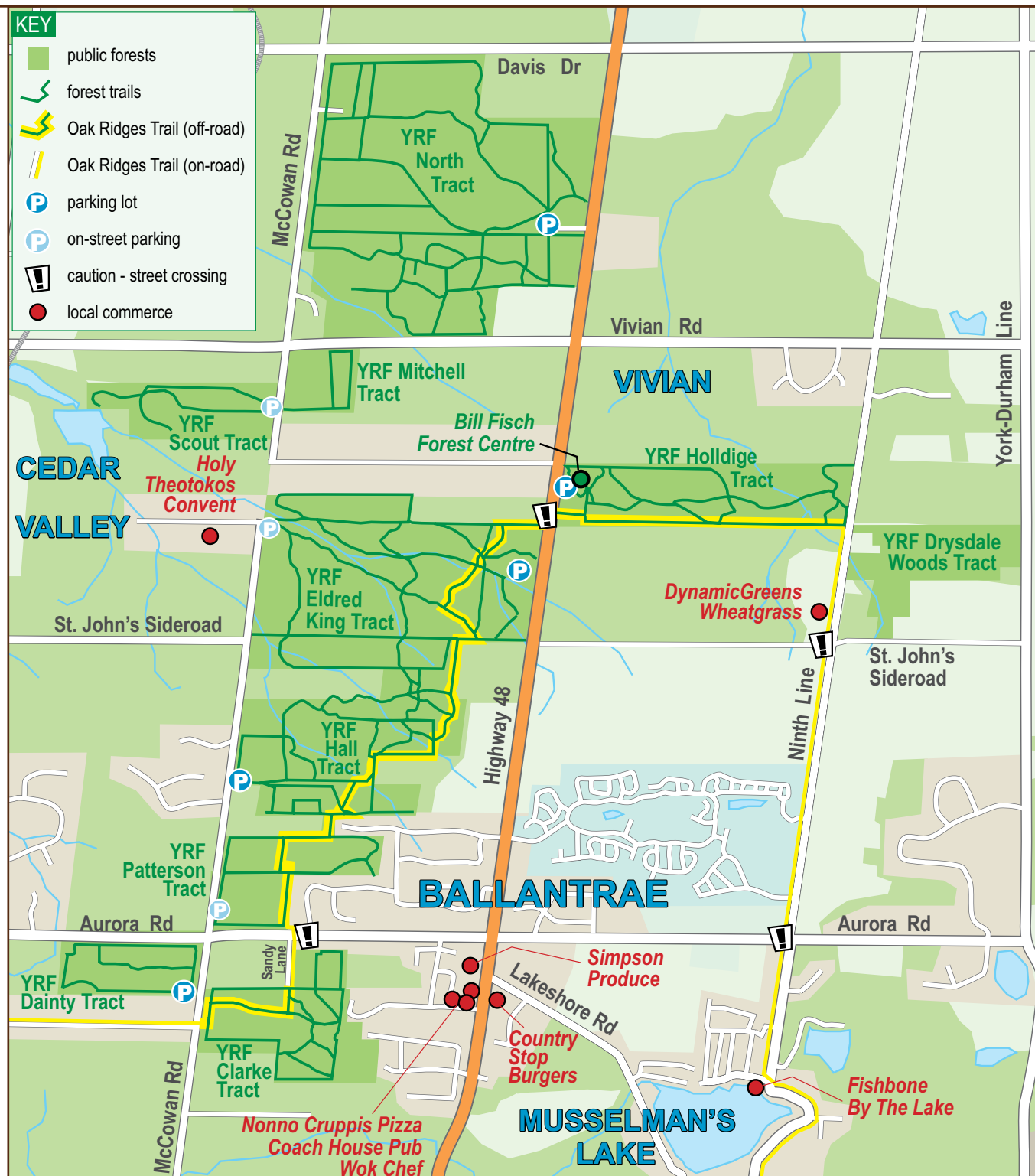
There 3 km of trails in Scout, 1.5 km in Mitchell. You must approach from Vivian Rd. and drive south on McCowan, as McCowan Rd. is split and dead ends past Eldred King; for this reason, these tracts are less frequented. Park on the side of the road, be respectful of the quiet neighbourhood. A pristine pond is located at the west end of Scout Tract.

North Tract

North Tract is by far the largest of the YRF tracts within Whitchurch-Stouffville. It is accessed by a single parking lot on Highway 48, between Vivian Rd. and Davis Dr. North Tract has 20 km of crisscrossing trails. It is reported to be the only spot in York Region to have a pair of breeding ravens. Bring a good map, then go and explore.

ORT: McCowan to Highway 48

Park at the Dainty Tract on McCowan and hike northeasterly along the Oak Ridges Trail (white blazes) to Highway 48. This 11.4 km round trip hike will bisect Clarke, Patterson, Hall, and Eldred King Tracts. Alternatively, park a second car in Eldred King's parking lot off Highway 48 for a one-way 5.7 km walk. Be extra cautious crossing Aurora Rd, and note that the connection between Patterson and Clarke Tracts (near Hwy. 48), which



is Sandy Lane, looks more like a private driveway than it does a road. Allow 4 hours for the round trip at the intermediate pace of 3 km an hour.

Hiking Preparedness

On a hot summer day, bring at least one bottle of water for each person for every 1.5-2 hours of hiking. Summer thunderstorms can sneak up on you, especially in the late afternoon. In the fall and spring, pack a jacket just in case the air cools down or rain falls.

Pack your cell phone. Bring maps - look for the *York Region Trail Atlas* and *YRF's Everyday Guide to the York Regional Forest*. The map above is based on these and other sources, but trails can change. Obtain the *Oak Ridges Trail Guidebook* for ORTA trail alignments. Be cautious at road crossings - some vehicles travel at high

speeds on rural roads.

Cuisine & Local Commerce

If you are visiting the McCowan side of Eldred King, you're within a block of a Holy Theotokos Convent; the nuns operate a very nice shop that features hand-made beeswax candles, jams & jellies, and soaps and baked goods. Open 11-7 daily. All are welcome.

Consider stopping at Simpson Produce for local carrots, potatoes and onions, or at DynamicGreens for wheatgrass juice (Wednesdays & Saturdays).

Try the world's best pizza at Nonno Cruppi's, great Greek food at Country Stop, or an ice cold beer at Coach House. Wok Chef is popular and Fishbone By The Lake is open seasonally.