



[left] A nice single-track section in Drysdale Woods, [right] A typical avenue through overgrown Christmas trees.

DRYSDALE WOODS YRF by David Tulley

In 2013 York Regional Forest acquired an additional 136 acres of land. The land came through to York Region by a donation from the Drysdale family who owned and managed it for 62 years. It became known as the Drysdale Woods Tract.

The Drysdale's acquired the property around 1950 and began to grow Christmas trees on it. Early on they supplied the American grocery chain Kroger's with Christmas trees. In the 1960s, they started offering a cut-your-own tree to the public. By the 1980s, the operation had become a full-time endeavor.

Drysdale Woods is a pleasant forest tract. It features a mix of overgrown Christmas trees and a naturalizing deciduous forest. The trails

are generally wide, but there are some nice tight areas in the back.

On this day it was lightly travelled. York Region Forest published a map back in 2013, but it seems to be intentionally missing from any trail guides since. A parking lot was built along York-Durham Line within the last year or so – it doesn't even show up on Google Maps, but can be seen on Bing Maps. From the west side of Drysdale Woods, one can cross Ninth Line and walk into the east side of Hollidge Tract; for that matter, you could make your way through connected forests to McCowan and beyond.

While walking on the trail I admit to miss-navigating twice, missing a small loop in

the southwest, and then missing an alternate return to the parking lot. A section of trail on the south side passes a picturesque horse pasture and some beautiful views (please, leave the horses alone – this isn't a petting zoo and keep your dog on a leash). Generally, the trails are very gentle, with exception to one slippery hill.

A bonus was finding a signed record-sized "Ironwood" tree (*ostrya* - 'Hop-hornbeam'), supposedly the biggest in Ontario, not to be confused with the Muscledwood or American Hornbeam, also known as Ironwood (*carpinus*). This forest is a good choice if you are trying to avoid some of the more crowded forest tracts. (I)



Trail: Drysdale Woods
 Time: 41 minutes
 Distance: 2.7 km
 Difficulty: Easy
 Starting Elevation: 280m
 Elevation Gain: 120m
 Forest: Mixed
 Highlight: A record tree
 Traffic: Light this day

