

# Rouge National Urban Park

Old-growth Forest Walks in Ontario's Greenbelt

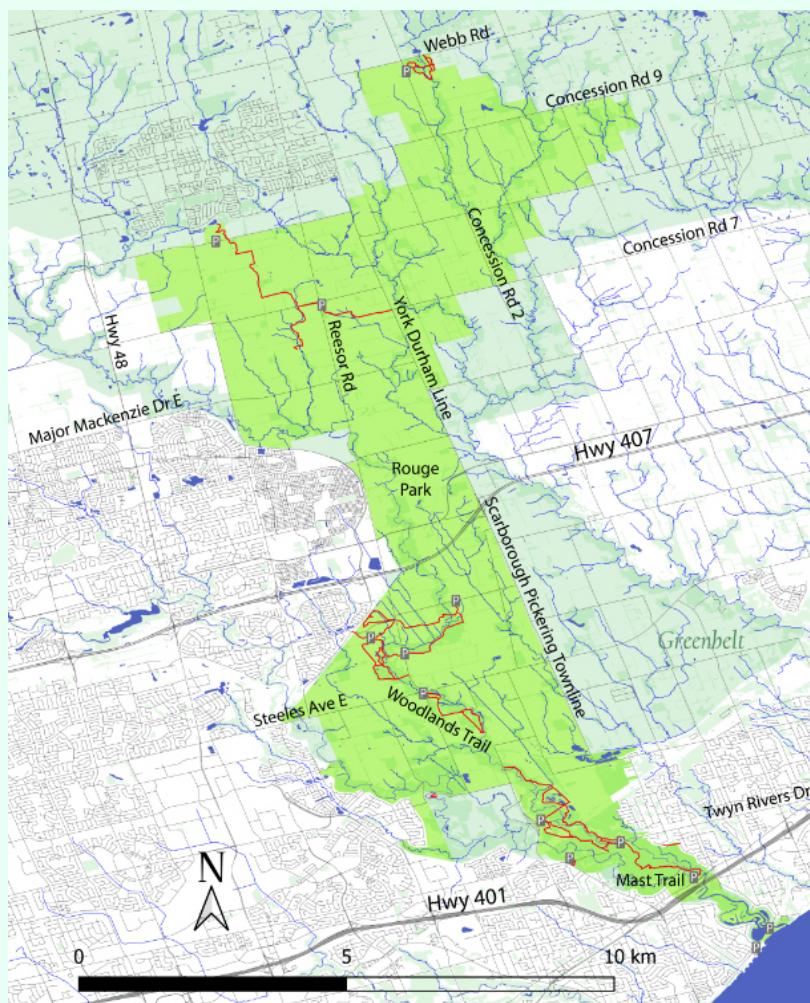
This is a huge natural park in the heart of the GTA, featuring mature maple and hemlock forest, remnant oaks from savannah forest, and a dramatic walk along a narrow “hog’s back” ridge between two rivers. A few hours could be spent wandering on the Mast Trail, with ample opportunity to continue exploring on the extensive trail system. Old-growth forest is also found along the Woodlands Trail.

## How to get there

**By car:** The Mast Trail can be reached from Kingston Rd at Glen Rouge campground. Parking for the trailhead is just before the entrance to the campground. The Woodlands Trail is off Reesor Rd just south of Steeles Ave E.

**By bicycle:** Glen Rouge is only a short bike ride from the Waterfront Trail, via Dyson Rd and Rougemount Dr.

**By public transit:** From Rouge Hill GO station, you can get to Rouge Park on TTC by taking bus 85a, exit at Sheppard Ave and Kingston Rd, and walk 1.2 km. Or take Durham Transit 900 Kingston Rd / Hwy 2, exit at Altona and walk 750 m to Glen Rouge.



The Mast Trail is said to follow a historic logging route - centuries ago large pine trees were dragged out by oxen to be used as masts for the British navy. Today the forest is second growth and you are seeing trees that regrew after logging, none of which are likely to be over 200 years old. The forest is once again entering the old growth stage, with trees reaching 120-180 years old, but it will be centuries yet before it attains its former grandeur and has trees as large as the ones used as masts in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As an urban natural area Rouge Park is already exceptional, with large tracts of mature forest and patches of old growth.

The Woodlands Trail is often overlooked but features scattered old cedars, hemlocks and sugar maples along the Little Rouge River.

## Learn more

Henry and Quinby, 2020. *Ontario's old-growth forests*, 2nd edition.

Henry, M., 2022 (expected publication). *Old-growth forest walks in Ontario's Greenbelt*. **Watch for the book in 2022.**

[www.oldgrowth.ca](http://www.oldgrowth.ca)

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