

Peter's Woods Nature Reserve

Old-growth Forest Walks in Ontario's Greenbelt

This is by far the least disturbed forest remnant in Ontario's Greenbelt, with oak and maple trees reaching at least 400 years old. It has all the hallmarks of old-growth forest including logs, snags, old trees and big trees. The nature trail is a short loop that can be walked in less than an hour. There are a couple of benches to rest, enjoy the view and take the time to admire the forest. On your walk pay attention to the fern-rich understory and diverse bird community.

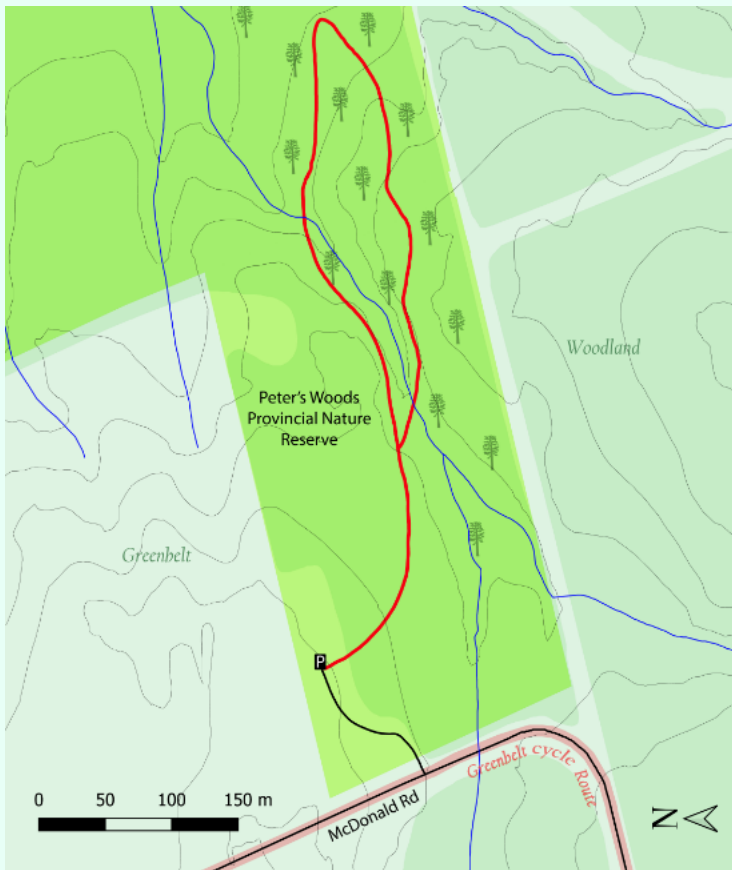


How to get there

By car: Peter's Woods is about 1.5 hours by car from Toronto. There is plenty of parking except on very busy weekends, down a short lane from McDonald Rd in Roseneath (44.1250, -78.0436).

By public transit: There are no convenient public transit options – the closest is probably Cobourg. The Oak Ridges Trail passes close to Peter's Woods and can be accessed from the Hwy 35 / Hwy 115 Park and Ride, where there is a GO bus stop, but there is little in the way of camping or accommodation between there and Peter's Woods.

By bike: The Greenbelt cycle route runs right past the entrance to Peter's Woods on McDonald Rd. There are outhouses at the parking lot.



Most of the Oak Ridges Moraine was cleared for agriculture and lumber in the 19th century. There are many stories of from the early 1900s of erosion, falling ground water levels, roads blocked by drifting snow or sand, and streams reduced to alternating floods and trickles. Across the entire oak ridges moraine, Peter's Woods is the only unlogged pre-settlement forest with trees dating back to at least the 1600's. The story told locally is that the McDonald family had to pay a fine to the crown because they refused to cut the trees in the woodlot. This makes Peter's Woods a very special place, where you can see the intact structure and processes of the forest. Dead trees are abundant, both standing snags and fallen logs in all stages of decay. There's a rich understory of ferns, scouring rush, and many other plants. please stay on the trail!

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

www.ancientforest.org