



# ALTONA FOREST

# Welcome

Welcome to Altona Forest – The large urban forest is located in the City of Pickering and is part of the Petticoat Creek watershed. It is 53 hectares (102 acres) in size and is situated on the boundary between the Carolinian and Great Lakes – St. Lawrence forest regions. There is a great variety of flora and fauna species in the forest including:

- Over 130 types of wild flowers;
- More than 100 different birds;
- Over 14 mammal and 10 herpetile species; and
- 35 distinctive vegetation communities.

If you cannot travel out of the city to experience nature, come and visit Altona Forest to see spectacular plant and animal species right at your door step.

For more information visit  
[www.altonaforest.org](http://www.altonaforest.org) or [www.trca.on.ca](http://www.trca.on.ca)



## Trail Highlights

- Located in the southern section of Altona Forest is the Murray J. Speirs Ecological Reserve, which was established to fully protect flora and fauna species. The only permitted use is for research purposes by universities and naturalists.
- Wild flowers of the spring and early summer are spectacular in the forest. Trilliums, trout lilies, spring beauties, blood root and more than a hundred others are all visible from the trails.
- From the end of March to the beginning of July, a variety of amphibians including wood frogs, green frogs, American toads and grey tree frogs can be heard calling at the ponds.
- In the winter, the foot prints of rabbits, coyotes and deer can be seen in the snow.
- The observation decks at the two ponds are great locations for bird watching. Bring your binoculars.
- Picnic tables around the parking lot are used by and other visitors who want a beautiful setting to relax and enjoy the outdoors.
- Temperatures are noticeably lower when within the forest in July and August. This creates a comfortable environment to enjoy a hike in the deciduous, coniferous or mixed forest types in Altona Forest.
- The haunting call of the pileated woodpecker, the screech of the blue jay and the calls of the cardinals, chickadees, red winged blackbirds, owls and even ravens, make for interesting company on a hike.

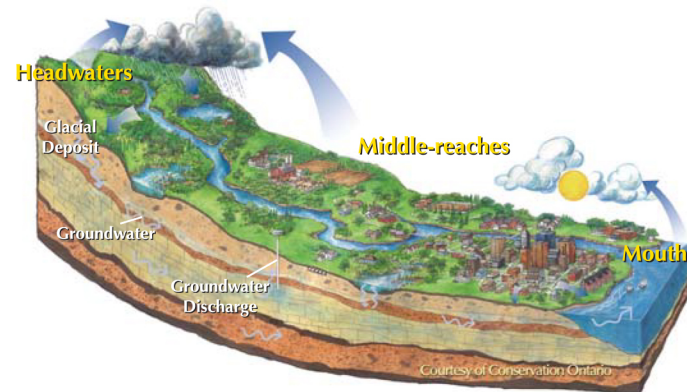
## Petticoat Creek watershed

Petticoat Creek watershed is one of nine watersheds within the Toronto and Region Conservation's (TRCA) jurisdiction. With a drainage area of approximately 27 km<sup>2</sup>, the watershed includes sections of the Cities of Toronto and Pickering and the Town of Markham. In contrast with many of the watersheds in the GTA, Petticoat Creek watershed does not originate on the Oak Ridges Moraine (ORM); the headwaters, or upper reaches, are located south of the ORM, between the larger Rouge River and Duffins Creek watersheds. It flows south and empties into Lake Ontario at the Petticoat Creek Conservation Area.

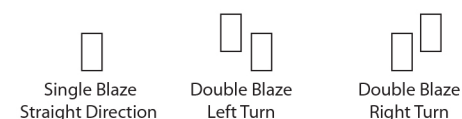
## A brief history of Altona Forest

During the 1950s, land developers started purchasing property in Pickering and by the mid 1980's, development within what is now known as Altona Forest was proposed. At that time a group of citizens who called themselves "The Friends of Altona Forest" lobbied to save as much of the forest as possible. In 1991, the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) acknowledged that "the overall biodiversity of this area is rare in such close proximity to an urban centre." In 1995, the Provincial government and the TRCA committed the necessary funds to purchase over 50 hectares of the forest. Also at this time, Dr. J. Murray Speirs donated a large portion of his own lands to TRCA as part of a larger "ecological reserve" within the Altona Forest. Following the purchase, The Altona Forest Environment Management Plan (1996) was completed. In 1998, the Altona Forest Stewardship Committee was formed to work with the TRCA for the restoration and improvement of the forest environment to date. The Stewardship Committee and its partners have been honoured with a number of awards from the City of Pickering, Region of Durham and TRCA for its work in Altona Forest.

## Watershed Cross-Section



The trail system that gently winds through Altona Forest provides a breathtaking natural experience for trail users to enjoy. In total, the 4.24 km of trail takes users through cedar and hardwood forests, wetlands and meadows. Comprised of two loop trails in the north and a single trail leading from the Strouds Lane entrance, users have the opportunity to take a short stroll or explore the entire property. The main trail is blazed with white paint and the loop trails are blazed with blue paint. Each blaze is a vertical rectangle, about five centimeters wide and 15 centimeters tall (two inches by six inches). A single blaze shows the direction to proceed. A double blaze indicates a direction change in the trail. By following all trail marking and trail rules listed in the trail guide you will certainly have a wonderful natural experience.



# ALTONA FOREST

Trail Guide and Map

### Emergency numbers

Police/Emergency Services  
**911**

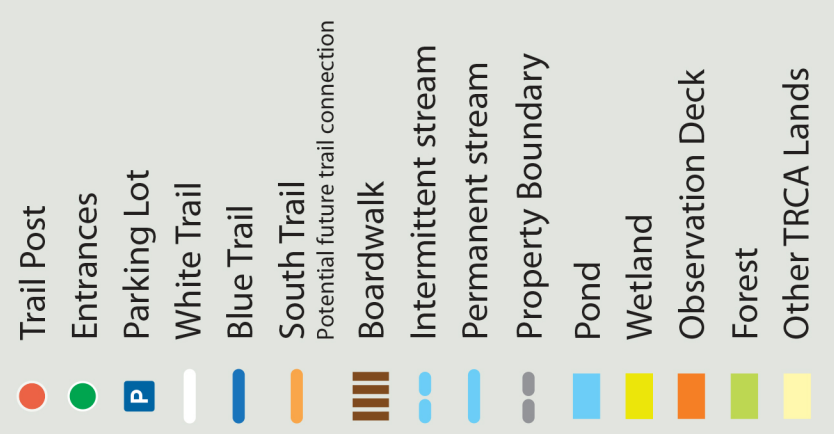
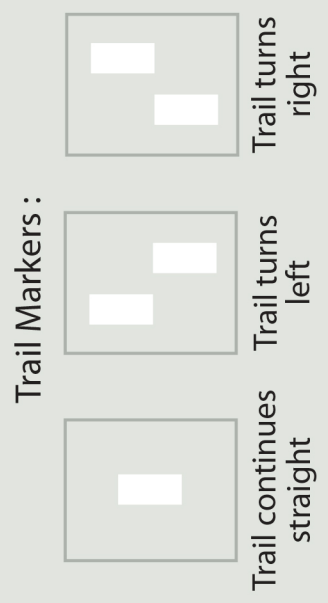
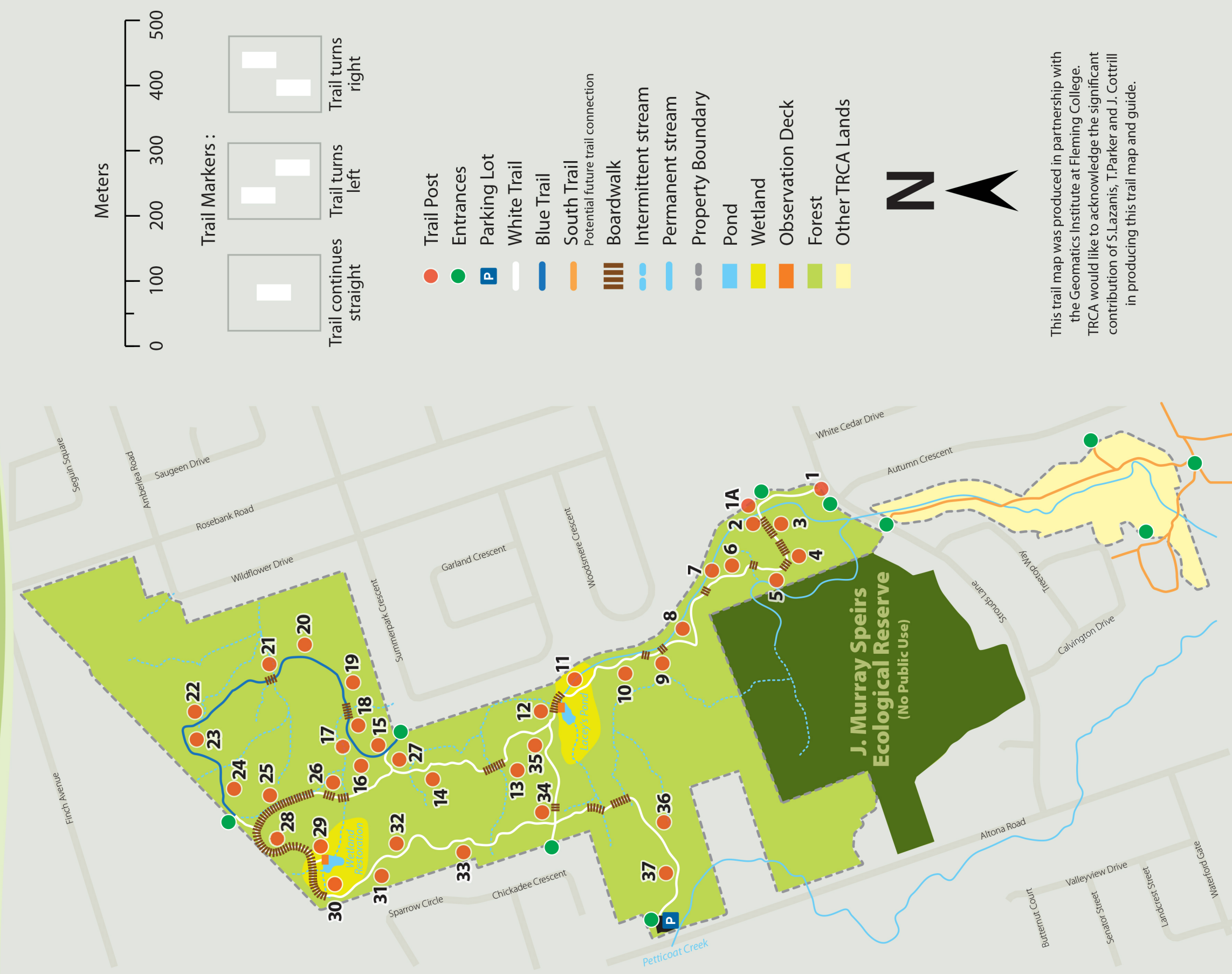
### Information numbers

Toronto and Region Conservation  
**416-661-6600**



5 Shoreham Drive,  
 Downsview, Ontario M3N 1S4  
 Phone: **416-661-6600**  
 Fax: 416-661-6898  
[www.trca.on.ca](http://www.trca.on.ca)

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This trail map was produced in partnership with the Geomatics Institute at Fleming College. TRCA would like to acknowledge the significant contribution of S.Lazanis, T.Parker and J. Cottrill in producing this trail map and guide.

## Trail rules

- Bicycles are not permitted in the forest
- Keep on marked trails and off private land.
- Do not create new trails, openings or use shortcuts.
- Please keep your dog on a leash for safety and wildlife reasons. You are responsible for your pet.
- Do not pick or damage vegetation.
- Do not climb fences — use the stiles provided.
- Carry out all garbage.
- Do not light fires.
- Do not feed or aggressively approach wildlife, including birds.

## Safety on the trails

- Users of these trails bear full responsibility for their own safety, as well as the results of their own negligence.
- In the case of an emergency, call 911.
- Trails are open year-round and conditions will vary seasonally. Please avoid using trails in wet weather as they are more vulnerable to erosion and damage.
  - Dress appropriately for weather conditions, surroundings and insects.
  - Bring adequate water to stay hydrated.
  - Ensure your children are within sight at all times.
  - Follow trail blazes at all times to ensure proper way-finding.
  - Use a compass if you are not familiar with the area.
  - Be aware of poison ivy.
  - Trails may be temporarily closed to ensure user safety. Please respect “closed trail” signs.

## Permitted activities

Passive activities including hiking, leashed-dog walking, cross-country skiing, snow-shoeing, bird watching and wildlife viewing are the only activities permitted on the designated trails within the property. All other activities constitute a trespass.



## Parking areas and trail access points

Parking areas are shown on the trails map. For safety reasons, we encourage users to use these designated areas. Safe trail access is provided at the parking area as well as all listed access points. Please do not attempt to access the trail at any other point.

## Trail marker posts

These posts are numbered and are clearly shown on the trails map. They will allow you to orient yourself anywhere in the forest simply by reference of the map.



Poison Ivy

