

## **The Uxbridge Countryside Preserve**

Thinking about hiking locations I might recommend as the weather gets colder, I decided to revisit one of my favourites over the past several years – the Uxbridge Countryside Preserve. I went there recently on a balmy early-November day, and (again!) wasn't disappointed. There are a lot of reasons to like this tract as a hiking or walking destination.

It's easy to get to – the main access point is immediately behind the Walmart store in Uxbridge. There is a small dedicated parking area with a large sign and map of the site.

It's easy to get around – there is a network of wide, well-maintained paths (about 9 km) on the site. At key points (usually trail junctions) there are posts with reference maps on them. The posts have an angled surface on the top, and are oriented so that the map reader is facing north. (This practice is used in many local forest tracts and conservation areas). The landscape is largely well-drained, keeping the trails relatively dry and solid.

Safety enhancements – features of this site can offer an increased sense of comfort / security. The site is well-used by many people, so walkers are less likely to feel isolated. While the perimeter of the property is treed, a large part in the middle is quite open, enhancing visibility. Trails are wide, with vegetation cut back, to reduce the risk of ticks (and COVID transmission).

Potential for a variety of hiking / walking – this site provides a mix of landscape features - including a stream, a pond, a hill with a lookout, forested and field areas. Also, there is an easy-to-follow 1.4 km connector trail running south to another forested parcel with trails (the Timbers Tract, part of the Durham Regional Forest).

The connector and Timbers Tract further expand the walking options available. The combined trails offered by these parcels make it easy to go for a 20 minute walk, or to hike for a couple of hours with little backtracking.

I've never been disappointed when hiking at the Countryside Preserve; it has a lot to offer. This link has information and trail maps:  
<https://www.uxbridge.ca/en/explore-and-play/countryside-preserve.aspx>