

## **Bayview Village Association**

### **Self-Guided Nature Walk through the Ravines of Bayview Village**

Distance: ~7.5 km<sup>1</sup>    Time: ~2.0 hours<sup>1</sup>

**Route:** This walk explores the ravine paths along the East Don River at the eastern edge of Bayview Village and along Newtonbrook Creek which runs through the middle of the community. Other than a short (~1 km) stretch on Finch Avenue, the walk follows paved, gravel and dirt paths through the ravine.

In earlier times, the ravine lands were used for farming, but the area is re-naturalizing to mixed woodland and wetlands. The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority along with its volunteers and partners such as the East Don Parkland Partners have planted hundreds of trees in the area. Tree species you may see include ironwood, black cherry and beech. The plants you will see depend on the season. In spring, there are blood root and in the fall the asters are outstanding.

While you'll likely see others on this route, it tends to be lightly travelled so your chance to see wildlife is good and may include: white tailed deer, fox, coyote, racoon, possum, red, grey and black squirrel, green frog, snake, turtle and many birds including: duck, geese, robin, blue jay, woodpecker, nuthatch, chickadee, cardinal, finch, hawk, heron, red winged blackbird, sparrow. In the fall, you may see salmon from Lake Ontario swimming up the river to spawn.

**Start/Finish:** Parking lot at northwest corner of Sheppard Ave & Leslie Street

The Leslie subway station is nearby and free parking (note the restricted hours) is available in the city parking lot just northwest of the intersection.

- By subway exit at Leslie Station (east end) and cross to the north side of Sheppard at the lights (note the art installation on the southwest corner – local residents call it the “rusty rail”)
- By car from Sheppard Ave westbound: take the first right turn east of Leslie Street onto Old Leslie Street, then right turn into the East Don Parkland parking lot
- By car from Sheppard Ave eastbound: take the first right turn east of Provost Ave onto Old Leslie Street, turn right and go over the bridge over Sheppard, then slight right then turn left into the East Don Parkland parking lot.
- There are public washrooms at the parking lot, but they close overnight and in winter.

<b>Km<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Directions</b>	<b>Things to Note</b>
0	From the East Don Parkland parking lot at Sheppard Ave & Leslie St, head north, crossing over the wooden bridge to come to a T intersection.	You will be crossing over the East Don River, which flows south east to meet the Don River. In the early nineteenth century this area was known as Clark's Settlement or Clarksville, one of the first communities in the area. The village had a smith, school and church. The home of founder Thomas Clark, built in the 1850s, still stands at 9 Barberry Place just south of Bayview Village Mall. If you look to your right when crossing the bridge you will see the remnants of an old dam.
0.2	After crossing the bridge, turn left at the T intersection and continue to follow the path north.	You will climb a hill, then follow the path down and around to the left and past a set of wooden stairs on your right which leads to a townhouse complex.
0.7	Cross the wooden bridge then turn right and walk under the railway bridge until you come to another wooden bridge over the river.	The railway overpass is used by the Richmond Hill GO train as well as freight trains. You will pass another, much larger, set of wooden stairs on your left, leading up to Clarinda Park.
0.8	Turn right over the wooden bridge; continue to follow the path north to the tennis courts on your right. There is also a public fountain in front of the tennis courts.	Along this stretch, you will pass some rapids on the river on your left. Shortly afterwards, you will come to a large pond on your right – look for wildlife including many birds and green frogs, as well as pond plants such as cattails and (invasive) yellow iris. Just past the pond is a path on your left leading over another bridge – do not take this path (we will return to this spot again later). On your right you'll pass a marsh area full of cattails.
1.5	At the tennis courts, you will come to a fork which turns left or goes straight to Alamosa Drive. Keep left and continue along the winding path. Deer are sometimes seen in the open fields on your left.  Continue north to the fork in the path just before the Finch Avenue bridge.	The path in this area edges along the border of what was once called Flynn town. This small settlement, with its brickyard, farms and mills, was one of the early towns lining the Don River. The stretch between Alamosa and Finch passes groves of deciduous and coniferous trees which give way to meadows.  After walking for a while you'll come to some large boulders and wooden fence posts on your left. This is an excellent area for viewing spawning salmon in the fall (typically late September).
2.8	At this fork, take the steep path on the	Note that the main ravine path continues under

	right, which leads up to Finch Avenue. At the end of this path, turn left and walk westbound on Finch.	Finch and travels north to Leslie Street and Steeles Ave. This section is also worth exploring, but is not part of Bayview Village.
3.0	Continue walking along Finch for a little over 1 km. Cross over Page Ave and Heathview Ave. After crossing Heathview (traffic lights) start to look for One Watergarden Way condominiums on your left.	You will cross over the bridge which crosses the East Don River, then climb a long steep hill. You will pass a small plaza on the north side of Finch with a TD CanadaTrust bank at one end and Beck Automotive at the other end. If you reach Bayview Avenue you have gone too far.
4.3	Just past One Watergarden Way, look for a steep gravel/dirt path on your left. This is the entrance to the Newtonbrook Creek ravine.	The street on the north side of Finch (on your left) is Gaspé Road.
4.4	Turn left off Finch and descend the steep hill into Newtonbrook ravine	This path can be muddy and slippery in wet weather. An alternative would be to walk further west to Bayview Avenue, turn left on Bayview Avenue, walk about 0.5 km then take the path on the left which leads up to Burbank Drive. Walk south about 0.5 km on Burbank and enter the ravine again by descending a steep path on the left between two houses at #205 And #207 Burbank Drive.
4.4	Continue to follow the gravel/dirt path south, then climb the steep, paved hill to Forest Grove Dr.	You will pass a small wooden bridge on your right, and, past that, marsh areas full of cattails on your left.
5.4	Cross over Forest Grove Dr. and descend the steep paved hill on the other side. Continue to follow the gravel/dirt ravine path south to a large wooden/steel bridge.	Newtonbrook Creek will be on your right and the ravine will slope up steeply on your left.
6.3	Turn left over the bridge and you'll come to a T intersection	The bridge crosses the East Don River. At the T intersection you'll rejoin the main East Don Trail.
6.4	Turn right at the T intersection and follow the path south, retracing your steps back to the parking lot at Sheppard Avenue and Leslie Streets.	You'll cross over three more bridges before returning to the parking lot at the start of the walk. Total distance from start to finish is approximately 7.5 km.

<sup>1</sup> All distances and times are approximate. Distance in kilometers from East Don Parklands parking lot at Sheppard Ave and Leslie Street

To provide comments on this walk, email: [bva@bayviewvillage.org](mailto:bva@bayviewvillage.org)

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### **Alternative Walks based on this walk**

As you follow this walk, you'll see many smaller paths leading off the main path which can be explored.

- For a shorter distance (~6 km), turn around when you reach Finch Ave (at 3 km) and follow the path back to the parking lot.
- For a longer distance (~10 km – 12 km), follow the path under Finch Avenue (at 3 km) and continue northeast to Leslie Street (do not exit at Bestview Drive). Turn left at Leslie St and walk north to Steeles Ave. Turn left and go west on Steeles to Laureleaf Road where you will turn left and walk south, crossing Bestview Drive and re-entering the ravine. Head back south along the ravine path. At Finch Avenue, you can either walk under Finch Avenue and retrace your path back to the East Don Parkland parking lot or follow the instructions from km 2.8 above.