

# Oaks & Acorns

Outdoor School 2021/22



Pine Project



# Welcome to the Pine Project!

The Pine Project fosters confidence, competence, resilience and connection to nature through transformative outdoor experiences for people of all ages in Toronto and beyond.

Our work inspires a vital re-connection between people and nature, community and oneself. We work primarily with children and families in the urban context, delivering innovative year-round outdoor programming.



Our goal is to inspire nature connection in childhood, supporting children to grow into healthy, active, and resilient people.



We extend our deep gratitude to the generations of People – past and present – who have tended this land, the Dish with One Spoon Territory. We acknowledge the abiding wisdom of the Dish with One Spoon treaty between the Anishnabeg and Haudenosaunee that bound them to share the territory and protect the land. The ‘Dish’ represents what is now known as southern Ontario; we all eat out of the dish with only one spoon, ensuring that our dish is never empty. This symbolizes our ongoing roles and responsibilities of sustaining the land and treating each other and all living things with equity and respect.

The Pine Project operates on the land we now call Toronto, which has been a site of human activity for thousands of years. ‘Toronto’ or ‘Tkaronto’, a Mohawk word meaning “where the trees stand in the water,”\* is part of the traditional territory of many Nations, including the Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Haudenosaunee, and most recently the Mississaugas of the Credit (of the Anishnabeg Peoples).

We are so fortunate to learn and play in two historically significant Valleys of the city:

- The Lower Don also known as ‘Wonscotonach’, translating to “burning bright point” or “black burnt country”, may refer to the practice of torchlight salmon spearing on the river, or to the impact of fire on the landscape.\* The Mississaugas of the Credit had a seasonal settlement here and fished and hunted the marshlands for muskrat, duck and deer.
- The Humber, also known as ‘Niwa’ah Onega’gaih’ih’ or “little thundering waters.”\* For at least 12,000 years an Indigenous trail followed the edge of the bluffs along this section of the Humber River valley. Just up river from where we gather weekly is Baby’s Point, a neighbourhood built on the same spot as ‘Teiaiagon,’ once a village of the Seneca and later the Mississaugas of the Credit.

Today, Toronto is home to many First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples from across Turtle Island. We acknowledge the history and ongoing process of colonization, and recognize that in order to realize the promise and challenge of reconciliation, acknowledgement must be coupled with action. We seek to move forward with humility, respect, gratitude and meaningful relationship building.\*We respectfully acknowledge the many histories and several translations associated with the history of this land.



# Contents

This package contains information on the following topics:

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Overview & Schedule

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Health & Safety

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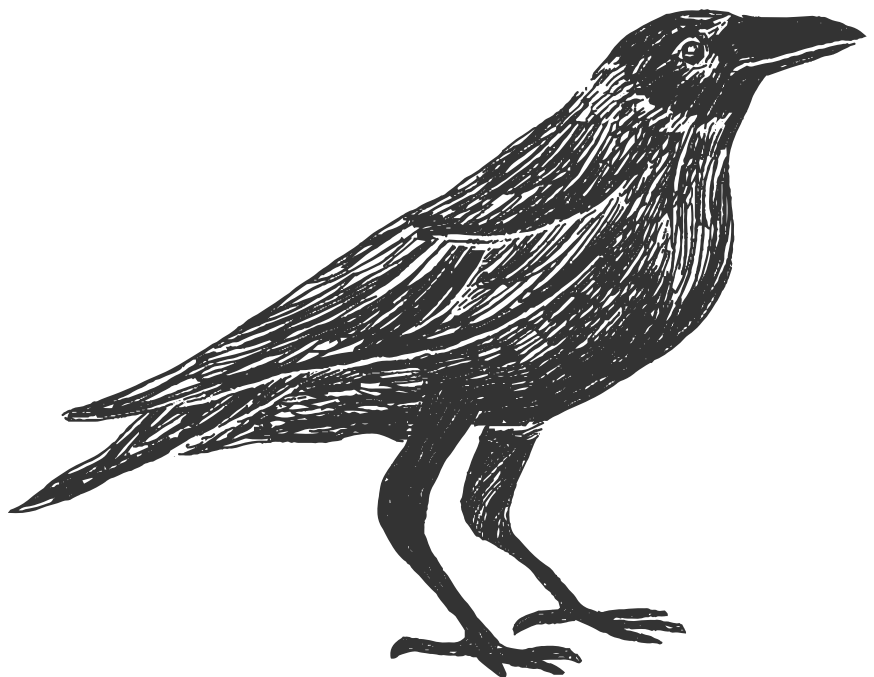
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Communication

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# Overview & Schedule

## Oaks & Acorns

### Location

Stan Wadlow (East) OR King's Mill (West)

### Timing

9:30am - 11:30am

### Program Dates

Sessions occur on a weekly basis between:

**Fall season:** October 4 - December 10, 2021

**Winter season:** January 4 - March 4, 2022

**Spring season:** March 28 - June 3, 2022

In Oaks and Acorns, we help caregivers integrate nature into their family's everyday life. As a group, we take short wanders in nature, share stories and songs, and get to know the plants and animals in our area. We actively teach caregivers mentoring techniques and naturalist knowledge, while children learn experientially. It's also a great chance to connect with a like-minded community, share experiences and advice, and build new friendships.

### Program Content Highlights:

- Creating nature connection in your home and day to day life
- Storytelling and songs
- Adventures, wandering and tracking wildlife
- Wild edibles, medicinals, and hazard plants (identification and uses)
- Stewardship and taking care of the land
- Nature-based crafting



## Flow of the day!

As the program is guided by natural curiosity and the changing needs of the group, a schedule is rarely followed exactly, but the below gives you a good idea of an average day at program.

**9:30am** Sign-in, Screening & Circle

**9:45am - 11:15am** Nature Activities\*

**11:15am - 11:30pm** Closing Circle

\*The group will stop for snacks at any time during this period depending on group needs.

# Health and Safety

We're committed to providing a safe environment for participants, staff and families.

**Pine programs will adhere to provincial and municipal public health guidelines as they continue to evolve, which means the details in this handbook may change.** We're continuing to closely monitor for updates and we're dedicated to communicating any changes to families as quickly as possible. Our [Covid-19 webpage](#) will be updated regularly and registered families will be emailed directly.

We all play a role in limiting the virus' spread in our community. Please visit the [City of Toronto's Covid-19 webpage](#) for more information on how you can protect yourself and others, how to identify and respond to symptoms of Covid-19, and other resources.

Please read the following details carefully and reach out to our team with any questions or concerns.

## Screening Procedures

### At-home online screening:

- Each morning before field sessions, take your temperature and complete our [online Covid-19 Screening Form](#).
- This form only allows for "No" answers to the screening questions. If your answer is "Yes" to any of the questions, please remain at home and email our team at [info@pineproject.org](mailto:info@pineproject.org) to notify us of the reason for absence.
- Upon submitting the form, a confirmation email will be sent to the email you've provided. **PLEASE BRING THIS CONFIRMATION EMAIL WITH YOU (ELECTRONIC OR PRINTED) TO PROGRAM.** Staff will confirm the date that the confirmation email was sent upon arrival (screening must be done the day of program).

### If online screening is not possible:

- Any participants who arrive to program without a screening confirmation email will be screened on site upon arrival. Please see the sample screening form at the end of this welcome package for screening questions.

## Illness

**If you are ill or if you know of a planned absence from program, please stay home and email [info@pineproject.org](mailto:info@pineproject.org).**

If a participant falls ill with Covid-19 symptoms while at program, they will be isolated from the rest of the group. Please ensure that you've provided two emergency contacts who are able to pick you or your child up within 1 hour of being contacted, if needed.

**We develop our policies and procedures based on guidance from Toronto Public Health. As guidance continues to change in response to the evolving Covid-19 situation in Ontario, our policies and procedures will be updated accordingly. Please see our ['Information for Program Participants' webpage](#) for the most up-to-date policies related to program screening, when participants can return to program after being ill, and more.**

**Participants who do not pass the Covid-19 screening will not be permitted to attend program.**



# Health and Safety

## Physical Distancing

We will encourage physical distancing within a group whenever possible. However, physical distancing may not be possible in situations such as providing first aid, during safety and emergency situations or inclement weather. In these cases, participants and staff will be required to use face coverings.

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## Hygiene and Sanitation

We have enhanced all hygiene and sanitation practices, including:

- Increasing the frequency of routine cleaning and disinfection of high touch surfaces and equipment.
- Requiring frequent hand washing/sanitizing. Hand sanitizer ( $\geq 70\%$  alcohol) will be used when soap and water is not available.
- Enforcing strict no-sharing policies for food and personal items.
- Reminding participants and staff to practice proper respiratory etiquette, such as sneezing or coughing into a sleeve or elbow.

## Masks

Please bring a clean mask to program each day in a plastic re-sealable bag. Participants will be required to wear masks if/when physical distancing cannot be maintained. Please bring paper bags, breathable cloth bags, or Ziploc bags to store clean and dirty masks (separately) when not in use (plastic bags are not recommended).

Thanks to the nature of our programming, there is often opportunity to physical distance. Our intention is to create space for mask-free outdoor experiences in every session.

Please refer to [Public Health Toronto's](#) recommendations on how to choose and properly use masks.

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## Weather

We do not cancel programs due to weather. Programs will run consistently throughout the winter, in all weather conditions. We employ strategies to stay warm: keeping active, finding shelter, setting up a tent or tarps. We have comprehensive emergency plans for all types of weather while at program, and our staff are trained in how to assess and manage risk. Please reach out to our office team if you're concerned and would like to know more.



# Health & Safety

## Special Accommodations

We do our very best to provide a positive environment for all of our participants. If you require special accommodations beyond what was described upon registration, please reach out to our team. Elaborating as much as possible allows us to understand how best to support participants' diverse needs.

While we may not be able to meet every participant's needs, we try our best to provide a wonderful experience for all.

## Behaviour & Expectations

At Pine, we're committed to living our values of diversity, equity, inclusion and justice. It's important that all people at programs feel included, safe and free from discrimination. Any language or behaviour intended to make participants or staff feel unwelcome or uncomfortable based on identity or ability will not be tolerated, and may lead to the participant being asked to leave programs.

## Ticks

Black legged ticks exist in Toronto city parks. We do our best to teach tick awareness in a positive and clear way. We suggest that you inform yourself on ticks, how to prevent and check for them, and options for their removal by reading the information sheet from the Ontario Government at: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/lyme-disease>.

## Washrooms

The parks are not equipped with washrooms or running water. There will be a private portable toilet available for the exclusive use of Pine Project participants and staff, which will be regularly cleaned and sanitized.

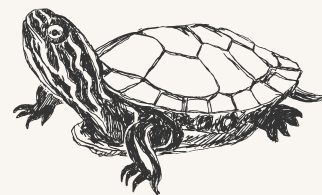
## Supplemental Forms

In order to ensure a happy, healthy program culture we need to collect some important information from all participants. Please ensure that you fill out the following supplemental forms as they apply to you. This year, it is especially critical that all participants submit these forms.

**Please note that there will be no hardcopy forms available for you to complete at program. If mandatory forms have not been completed online prior to the start of program, we may not be able to welcome you.**

- Oaks & Acorns CHILD Additional Info, Medical Form & Guardian 1 Waivers (Mandatory)
- Secondary Guardian Waivers (Mandatory for ALL child participants with 2 legal guardians)
- Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan (Mandatory for any participant with a known anaphylactic allergy)

You can access these forms by logging into your account on our online registration system.



**\*\*\*All supplemental forms must be submitted before you will be able to join us\*\*\***



# Communication



If you're running early or late, or in case of emergency, you can contact the field staff (during program hours) at:

**WEST Field Phone:**  
**(437) 771 1176**

**EAST Field Phone:**  
**(437) 771 3225**

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For all inquiries, please contact our administrative team:

Contact us by phone:

**(416) 792 2772**

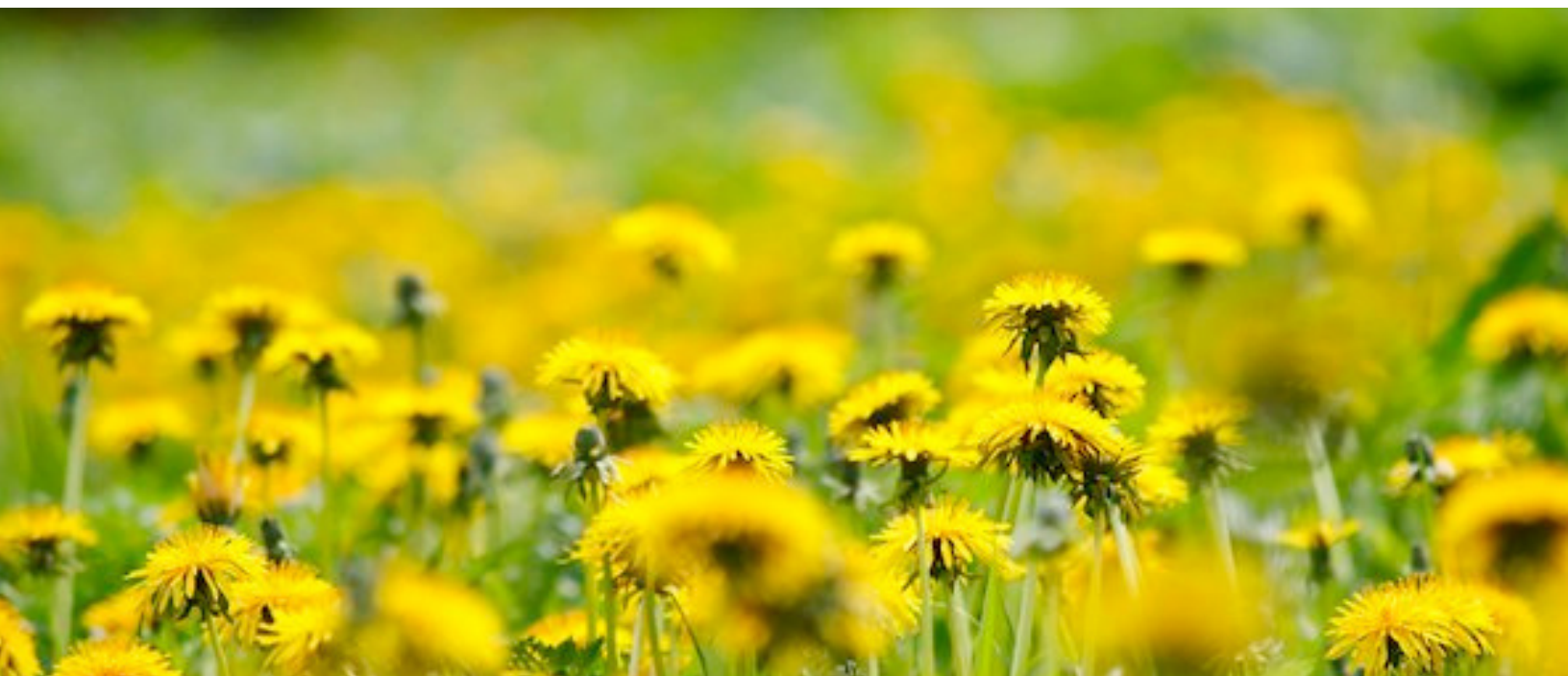
Contact us by email:

**[info@pineproject.org](mailto:info@pineproject.org)**

## Providing Feedback

At the Pine Project, we believe that transparent communication is the best way to work through a problem. We are committed to gathering feedback and hearing all voices. If something comes up that makes you uncomfortable, please let us know by taking the following steps:

1. Talk to a lead instructor in your program. Let them know you have some feedback you'd like to share, and ask when a good time would be to share it. They will bring the feedback to their team for discussion.
2. Ask lots of questions and be curious about the issue. Find out as much as you can before forming a conclusion or judgment.
3. If you feel as though your concern has not been addressed, contact our office team.



# What to Bring Checklist

## Clothing

**Weather Appropriate Clothing**

Make sure to dress for the weather. We are outdoors in all weather (rain, shine, cold and snow!)

**Cold Weather:** Insulated and waterproof boots, snowsuits, warm gloves or mitts, scarves, and hats.

**Rainy Days:** Rain boots and rain jackets.

**Extra Clothing - REQUIRED**

Please come with an extra set of clothes for your child.

## Other

**Face Coverings**

Participants must bring a clean non-medical mask each program day in a plastic re-sealable bag. Please refer to [Public Health Ontario](#) and [Public Health Toronto's](#) recommendations on how to choose and properly use face coverings. (Please refer to the Health & Safety section of this Welcome Package for more info.)

**Hand Sanitizer (if not allergic)**

## Food & Drink

**Snacks**

We will stop for snacks each program day. Please pack litter-free and nut-free food.

**Water**

Please come with all the drinking water you and your child will require for the duration of program. We will not be able to refill water on site.

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## Lost & Found

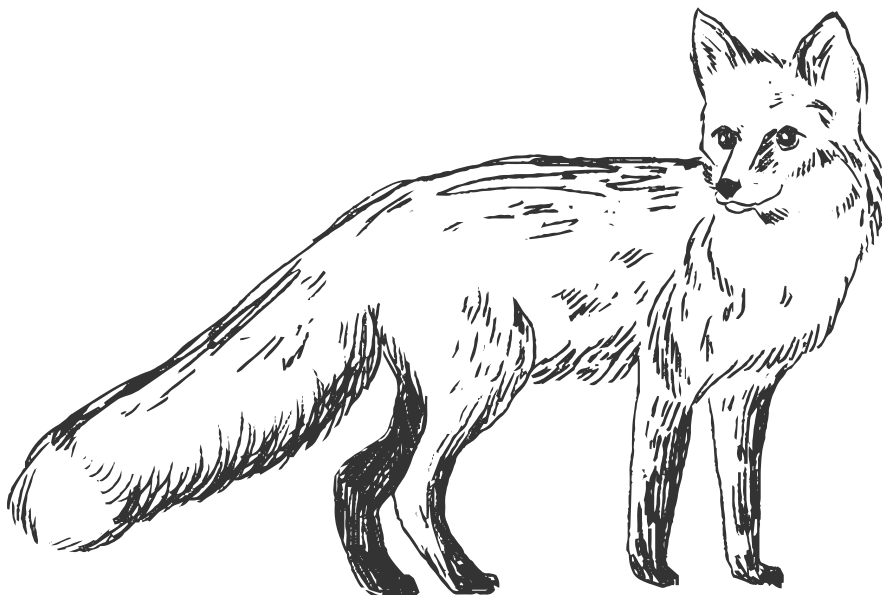
Given the circumstances this year, we will not be managing Lost & Found.

**We recommend that all belongings are labeled!**



### **Please DO NOT bring:**

Anything valuable or electronic, or distracting toys.





# Directions - EAST END

## Stan Wadlow Park

43°42'00.1"N - 79°18'47.1"W

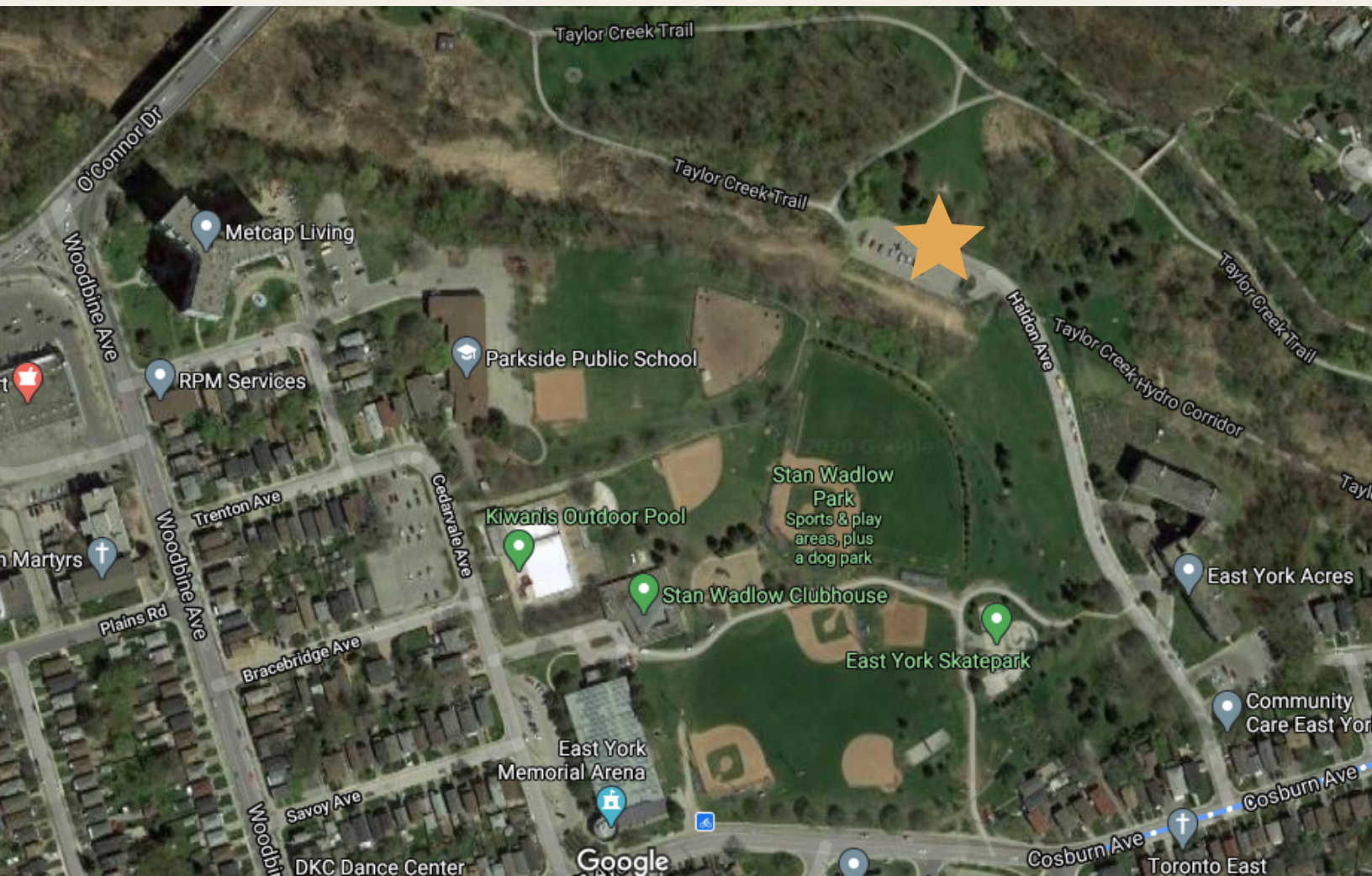
Central Meeting Location: Next to the parking lot

### Transit/Walking Instructions

- Take the Line 2 (Bloor-Danforth towards Kennedy) Subway to Main Street Station
- At Main Street Station, take the 87A Cosburn to Broadview Station Via East York Acres bus for 10 stops
- Get off the bus at East York Acres Parking Lot At Haldon Ave
- Turn right onto Haldon ave and continue towards the meeting location

### Biking/Driving Instructions

- Heading East on the Danforth, turn left onto Woodbine Avenue.
- Continue North and turn right onto Cosburn Avenue.
- Continue East and turn left onto Haldon Ave
- Continue until the designated parking lot





# Directions - WEST END

## King's Mill Park 43.64958, -79.49202

### Transit/Walking Instructions

- Take the subway to Old Mill Station.
- When you exit, turn left out of the station.
- Turn left again onto Bloor St. Stay on the North side as you walk East.
- When you approach the bridge you will see a set of stairs on your left side. If you cross over the Humber River you have gone too far.
- Take the stairs down and turn Left, walking Northeast, past the parking lot until you see us in the nearby field.

### Biking/Driving Instructions

- Heading West on Bloor St, turn right on Old Mill Trail (where the subway station is) and then another right on Old Mill Rd. Off of Old Mill Rd. you will see an entrance to King's Mill Park on the right.
- Turn right into the park and follow this paved road, past the first parking lot on your right. You will see us in the big field to your left (just before the second parking lot).

