

# Regional forests attracted 6,800 last year

*But if you plan to visit, be sure to come prepared with proper equipment, clothing*

BY AMANDA PERSICO  
Staff Writer

Those who visit the York Regional forest system would not believe it was once a barren desert.

With more than 2,000 hectares spanning 18 public forest tracts, it's a greening success story.

After a massive white pine logging movement in the late 1800s, part of the forests were bare and dry.

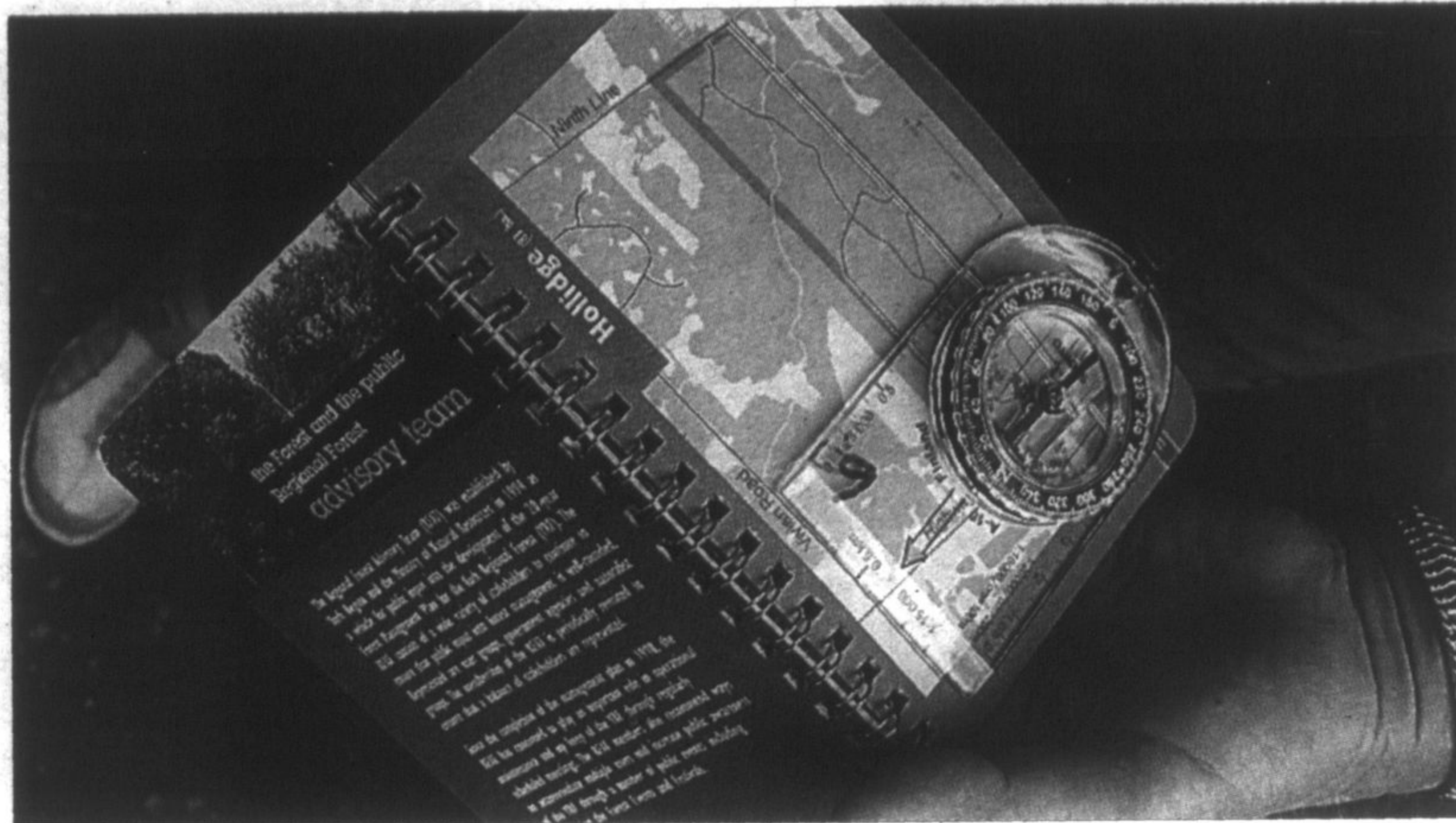
The Hollidge tract, purchased by York County in 1924, was the first property to be re-forested, York Region forest stewardship specialist Pam Fulford said.

Last year, more than 6,800 people travelled through the forest.

Finding your way along the pathways is easy, but getting back to your car could pose a bit of a problem.

Forest education specialist Lorie Parrott offers tips to stay safe in the woods.

- **Dress appropriately.** Long pants, long shirt, closed-toe shoes and a hat. Having too many layers is better than not having enough.
- **Carry a light backpack** with some water, snacks and some sanitary wipes.
- **Bring a cellphone** and hike with friends.
- **Beware of poison ivy**, a native species in the forest. If you see leaflets of three, let it be. If you encounter poison ivy, rub area with sanitary wipes and water.
- When driving into the forest,



A map book and compass can prove to be invaluable when you venture into the woods, especially if you become lost.

**take note of the green number sign** at the entrance. The green address numbers also match up to a place on the map.

• **Identify the park you are visiting.** There are 18 tracts, some with connecting trails, all part of the York Regional Forest.

• **Before hiking down a trail, locate yourself on the forest bulletin board** at the entrance.

• **Before you enter dense forest, find yourself on the map.** Each visi-

tor is given a handy little map book for each tract. Trails and parking are shown on the map.

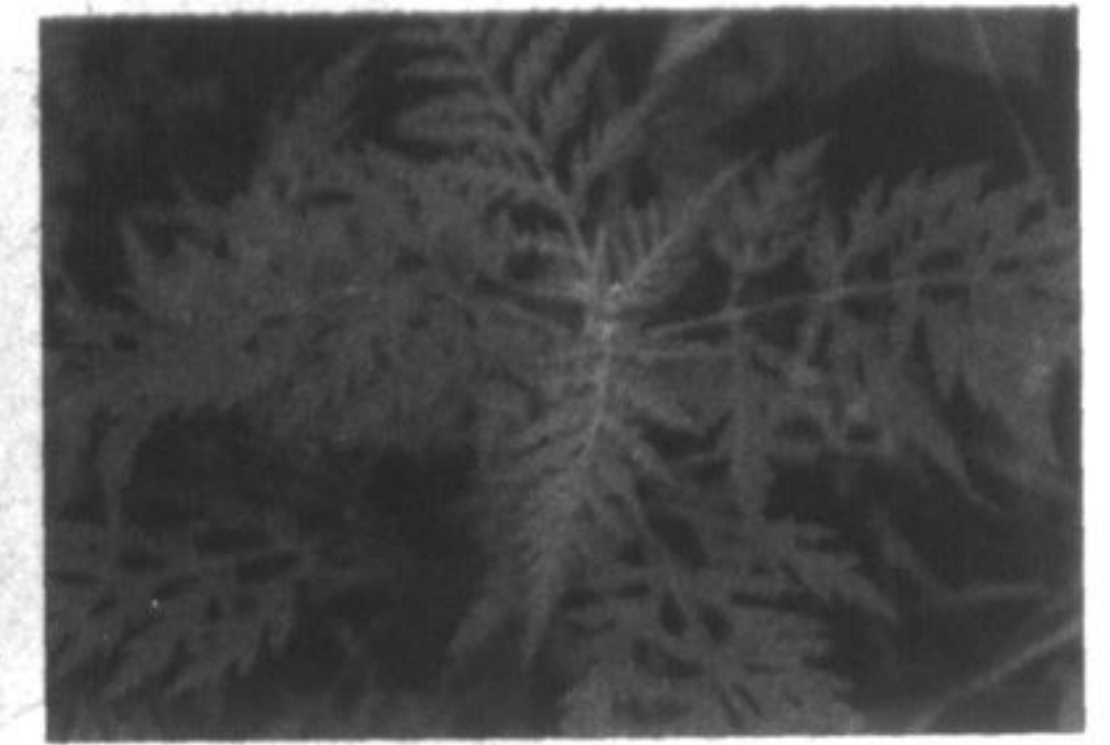
• **When on a trail, follow your steps** along the map.

• **If you have a compass, fix your map to north** by placing the map on the floor with the compass on top. Rotate the map until the north sign on the compass matches the north sign on the map. You want to read the map in relation to the real world.

• **Stay on the trail system.** If unsure, don't walk the entire length of the trail. Walk to the first trail intersection then retrace your steps to get back. Travel farther along the trail next time.

The York Regional Forest also hosts monthly public events and special guided tours for community groups.

Pack your supplies and head to the forest for an educational hiking experience.



## FOREST EVENTS

Here are some of the events taking place in the York Region Forest in the coming weeks:

► **Today:** The Dirt on Bugs, 10 a.m. to noon at the Bender and Graves Tract at 17689 Kennedy Rd. Unravel the good and bad about forest insects and honey bees.

► **Sept. 27:** Annual Fall Forest Festival, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Hollidge Tract, 16389 Hwy 48. See the changing colour of the leaves and take a horse-drawn carriage ride along the trails.

► **Oct. 18:** Forest Fishes and Fungi, 10 a.m. to noon at the Hollidge Tract, 16389 Hwy 48. Walk along the stream embedded deep within the forest and learn about the forest aquatic resources.

## Couple celebrates 70 years of marriage

*'Don't take anything for granted,'*  
Eureta Skinner says

BY ALYSHIA HIGGINS

Just call it another milestone under their belts.

Eureta and John Skinner will mark their 70th wedding anniversary today, but Mrs. Skinner said it's just the latest one of many events the Stouffville couple has been through together.

"It hasn't always been easy," she said. "We've had every possible thing happen in (our) family, but it's all worked out."

Mrs. Skinner, 92, met Mr. Skinner, 93, after he came to Canada from England when he was 17. The couple lived down the road from one another on Ninth Line.

"I knew I was going to marry

him," Mrs. Skinner said. "There was no doubt about it. We were perfectly matched."

*'We never bluffed each other. We always said what we were going to do and we did it.'*

The couple wed and had two children. Mrs. Skinner became a school teacher and Mr. Skinner served as a sergeant during the Second World War. When he returned, they added to their family, growing it to five children.

Mr. Skinner became a brick and tile layer and then a maintenance worker in a Whitby hospital.

While they've both been retired since 1975, their fam-

ily has continued to expand. The couple now has 10 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

Despite their career achievements, military service and milestones as parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents, Mrs. Skinner said there's another major accomplishment worth mentioning.

"We survived," she joked.

As for the key to a successful marriage, Mrs. Skinner was very clear.

"Be perfectly honest and don't take anything for granted," she said.

"We never bluffed each other. We always said what we were going to do and we did it."

Today's celebration takes place at Parkview Village Auditorium, 12184 Ninth Line, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. All are welcome to attend, best wishes only.



Eureta and John Skinner soon after they met. The Stouffville couple will mark their 70th wedding anniversary today.



### Our Natural Setting Enhances Learning

Willowgrove Primary School offers affordable educational experiences from JK to Grade 3

Located on 100 acres, our teachers use the natural setting at Willowgrove to enhance the learning in the classroom. Besides regular school activities, wagon rides, creek studies, and barn visits are an integral part of our program.

- Low student teacher ratio size
- Follows the Ontario school curriculum
- Before and after school care available
- All for about the same cost as daycare



Call or Visit us today • 905-640-2127 • [www.willowgrove.ca](http://www.willowgrove.ca)