



THE RATTLER

The newsletter of the



Bruce Trail
CONSERVANCY

PENINSULA CLUB

2024 #2

In This Issue

● <u>President's Message</u>	03
● <u>Peninsula Bruce Trail Club Pioneers: Ron Gatis</u>	05
● <u>Sunrise Shores Nature Reserve</u>	12
● <u>Amaya's Birding Story</u>	14
● <u>Trouble on the Trail – Forces of Nature</u>	16
● <u>New Bootscrubbers Installed</u>	25
● <u>Opening the Gunn Point Loop Trail</u>	26
● <u>From the Tour du Mont Blanc to the Bruce Trail</u>	28
● <u>Tobermory Trail Race: A Runner's Paradise</u>	34
● <u>Remembering Ross Ross McLean</u>	38
● <u>International Friendship Trail Opening</u>	42
● <u>Laura and Tom's Trailblazing Contributions</u>	43
● <u>Young Volunteers Plant 400 Trees</u>	45



Tamara Wilson

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I recently re-hiked a section of the Trail that I had power-hiked in 2011 when I was focused on earning my End-to-End badges. Fast-forward to today: years of hiking the Bruce Trail have taken me on a journey of discovery and education. On a path of progressive curiosity, I have expanded my knowledge with every identification and study of the plants and wildlife that make the escarpment their home. When I was last on this particular part of the Main Trail back in 2011, I was only a few years into my conservation learning curve. Today, I realize that time and knowledge provide us with perspective, allowing us to experience familiar places through a new sensory lens.

When I tried to explain my new observations of natural features that I would have easily passed by 13 years ago, my husband, Tim, compared it to a party with friends where you know everyone versus a party where you know no one. Which party would you rather attend?

The Peninsula Club Community has many types of connections, celebrations, and friendships: friends who hike, friends who connect with local groups, friends who pick up litter, friends who organize festivals and events, friends who plant trees, pull invasive species, keep the trails clear and maintained—and the list goes on! Organized hikes, connecting with local communities, developing new sections of trail, participating in volunteer-led fundraisers, and celebrating events are great ways to meet new people, experience new things, and learn about conservation. Please share this edition with your friends, family, and communities. Maybe they will see an activity that resonates with them and join the Peninsula Club fun!

Tamara Wilson
Peninsula Bruce Trail Club President

THE RATTLER



Bruce Trail
CONSERVANCY
PENINSULA CLUB

2024, ISSUE 2

PENINSULA BRUCE TRAIL CLUB

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ARTICLE SUBMISSION

If you have a story that might be of interest to Rattler readers, please send it to pbtc.hikes@gmail.com.

Deadline for submissions for the next edition is November 7, 2024

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We acknowledge the Traditional Territory of the Anishinabek Nation: The People of the Three Fires known as Ojibway, Odawa, and Pottawatomie Nations. And further give thanks to the Chippewas of Saugeen, and the Chippewas of Nawash, now known as the Saugeen Ojibway Nation, as the traditional keepers of this land.

*A handshake deal blazed
the way for the Bruce
Trail in the Peninsula*



Peninsula Bruce Trail Club Pioneers: Ron Gatis

BRENDA STEWART
PBTC ARCHIVIST

At the PBTC AGM, held on May 11, 2024, the 60th anniversary of the birth of the club and the volunteers who helped make it happen were celebrated. Two of the club's founding pioneers, Shirley Johnstone and Ron Gatis, were present.

Ron Gatis was also honored at the AGM for nearly 60 years of generously hosting the Bruce Trail on his properties, one of which became the BTC's MapleCross Nature Reserve at Hope Bay this spring. (See Bruce Trail Conservancy Magazine Spring 2024, pg. 25, for more information on this new reserve, which secures over 2.4 km of Bruce Trail.)

In 2017, at an event celebrating the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Bruce Trail, Ross McLean spoke about Ron Gatis as one of the "faithful landowners" in the Peninsula section.

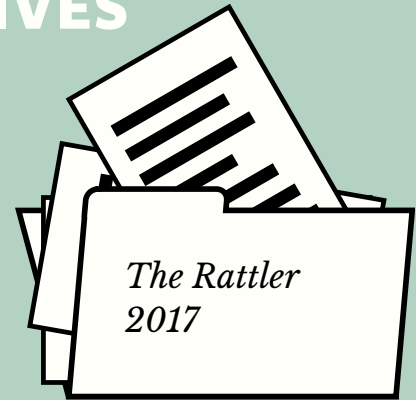
The birth of the Bruce Trail is a well-known story: the vision of Ray Lowes in 1959, and then Philip Gosling's work, initially in 1962, to organize local clubs to put the Trail on the ground. In a mere five years, the Trail was completed.

But that success took tremendous volunteer involvement; remember that there was no paid staff and no outside funding. The idea was a naively utopian one: that landowners would give free-of-charge permission to allow people to walk across their property. Their motivation was simply that of a "generous citizen" who was pleased to share the beauty of their land with others. Without such cooperation, there would never have been a Bruce Trail.

In the Peninsula, one key landowner is Ron Gatis. Ron tells the story of first discovering the idea of the Trail. He was working in Toronto and saw a map in a newspaper that proposed that the trail go right through the family farm at Colpoy's Bay. Ron called his mother, who said that it was a "great idea." She regarded the family as "custodians of the land," not just owners: they wanted to share its beauty with others. This was the first handshake agreement obtained in the Peninsula, and it has existed to this day.

Author's Note; Thanks to its donation, the original 1965 BT Guidebook signed by Ron Gatis is now on display in the PBTC archives at the Ferndale Information Office.

FROM THE ARCHIVES



The following is an article Ron wrote for the Peninsula Club's Rattler Newsletter in 2017

60 Years Ago - Building the Trail

**BY RON GATIS
FROM THE RATTLER IN 2014**

About 1955 when I was living in Toronto working at the CBC and my wife Sheila was working for Simpson's, an article in the Daily Star caught our attention. It showed a map of a proposed hiking trail that would go across my mother's property on the Bruce Peninsula both in Amabel and Albemarle Townships. I discussed this with my mother, Stella Whicher Gatis, who thought it was a nice idea. I knew no one involved in this venture but later, I'm not sure of the date, or why, but I attended a meeting in Edwards Gardens where they had maps showing the proposed hiking route through our family property.



Hikers, 1969

Shortly after this in 1956 we both gave up our jobs in Toronto and moved to my home village of Colpoy's Bay, where we still live two hundred yards from the house where I was born.

To accurately remember what happened over 55 years ago is a bit of a stretch but I do remember a meeting in Wiarton with Phil Gosling and Ray Lowes and eventually speaking to landowners and getting permission to have the trail cross their property. I helped blaze the route and did some work on the trail between Wiarton and Hope Bay but nothing compared to the work of Duncan Armstrong's work from Wiarton to Cape Croker; or the Fowlers, who worked on the trail both north and south from Lion's Head.

I was the first President of the Lower Bruce Trail Club and wasn't one for holding local meetings so a lot of trail building and maintenance was done by groups from out of the area. Some of them would park behind our old general store then camp and work for the weekend. Many of the workers would buy their lunch in the store so my mother kept a booklet for them to sign. I hope I can find it someday.

I think the best part of my association with the Bruce Trail was to keep it on our property from its beginning to the present. It has had several reroutes but never been closed except for one day a year in the early years. There may be a few private land owners with more trail on their property but with the loop trails and the main trail there are over 10 kms on our property that the public has been able to use.

Before the official opening of the Bruce Trail in 1967, the executive decided to have a cairn built in Tobermory at the end of the trail and hired Ivan Lemcke to build it and local artist Ruth Arnsberger was to design it. Grif Ebel of Ebel Quarries donated the emblem insert. Ruth and I drove over to the Lake Huron shore where she picked out the stones. I loaded them onto my truck then later unloaded them at the spot where the cairn was to be built in Tobermory.

A few years ago at a Wiarton Rotary Club party at the Waterview Motel in talking to Ivan Lemcke, we got reminiscing about the trail and the cairn and the stones we had provided. Only then did I learn that most of the stones that Ruth and I had picked had been pitched over the bank into the water, probably by some kids, and Ivan had to go and pick more stones himself.

One of the most memorable events from the early days was when the Lower Bruce Trail Club hosted the Annual Meeting for the Bruce Trail Association. I recall some of the people involved in organizing it were Baptist Minister Rev. Dick Cross and his wife Mary, who were avid hikers and Bruce Trail workers; the owners of Wildwood Lodge and Evergreen Lodge who were friends of mine and were happy

to provide accommodation and meeting facilities; Keith Solomon with his wife and friends looked after all the other details and I believe everyone thought it was a success.

A major highlight for me was when J.P. Johnstone asked me if I would be the transportation manager for the Duke of Edinburgh Awards hike from Tobermory to Owen Sound. His hike involved over twenty young people from all over the world, who had been chosen to receive a Duke of Edinburgh award. Jack and Shirley Johnstone did a tremendous job in looking after accommodations, feeding, entertaining and making sure about twenty-five people had a happy memorable ten days on the Bruce Trail. The Johnstones were a good example of if you want something done, ask the busiest person you know. They were in politics, farming, sawmilling, ran a motel, worked in Tobermory and were raising a family. Jack also found time to get a pilot's license and fly his own plane! He also did custom combining.

My job was to set up the campsites and help Ken McKay, who was the cook, and be ready to feed the hikers when they arrived each day. After breakfast the next morning the hikers would help load my truck then I would drive on to the next campsite. Usually we would be set up early in the afternoon and I would walk up the trail and come in with the hikers. After all these years Sheila and I still get an update at Christmas from an Australian couple who met on the hike and keep track of the other hike members.

About 1966 or 1967 Dr. Hauch from Owen Sound was President of the Bruce Trail Association and J.P. and I were on the executive. A couple of times Dr. Hauch



Hikers, 2010

rented a plane and pilot to fly us to the meetings. When René Brunelle was the Minister of Lands and Forests, he asked me to go along to look at the Peninsula from the air. We grew up along the escarpment and then back and forth across the two northern townships. From the air it looked to be mostly lakes and bush. It's good that much of this area is presently available for all of us to appreciate and hopefully not overuse.

The Bruce Trail has had a great influence on my life. I was always into sports but not hiking until the Bruce Trail was thought of. About 1970 three fellows from Toronto whom I met because of the Bruce Trail, asked me if I would join them for a week's hike on the Presidential Range in New Hampshire. Short hikes with cabins to sleep in, led by members of the Appalachian Trail Club sounded like a walk in the park. After three days hiking I thought I was going to die. When we were crossing a highway, we met Ida Sainsbury, a seasoned hiker who had walked the length of both the Bruce and Appalachian Trails. I pleaded with her to drive me back to Pinkham Notch. She would have none of it! She said I was Canadian and I couldn't quit in front of these Americans. I did finish the hike and about ten years later I did the same hike with leader Willard Kinzie and had a great time since

by then I was a more seasoned hiker thanks to the Bruce Trail. My best hike with Willard was to the bottom of the Grand Canyon with my son Peter.

I'm not sure how I met Ron Baylis but his Comfortable Hiking Holidays took me on hiking trips I would never have done on my own. With him I was on trips from the Canadian Rockies to Slovenia in Europe and a dozen places in between. My long hiking trips ended when he retired. I will always be grateful for having had Ron Baylis and his wife Eleanor as friends and hope they are still hiking. Ron also led weekend trips on the Bruce Trail and other Ontario trails. On the Peninsula section he would stay at Evergreen Lodge and I would usually have a meal or two with the group and hike on the Saturday with many of his friends. He also led hikes at Tobermory staying at a local lodge.

Another hike leader is Greg Vincent who brings hikers to this area and uses Wildwood Lodge for a base. My wife and I usually enjoy a meal with the group and on their final hike of the weekend, usually Monday of the May holiday weekend, they eat their bagged lunch by the creek in our backyard at Colpoy's Bay with tea and lemonade provided. It is now a tradition and we have made many friends over the years.

One of my most memorable hikes on the Bruce Trail was along the shore and on top of the cliff from Cabot Head to High Dump. When my two friends and I arrived at Cabot Head there were dozens of policemen and Lands and Forests personnel as well as a helicopter and a police boat. They weren't going to let us hike and then someone recognized me and said we could help them. The situation was that the previous day a group of disadvantaged people had been

on an outing and when they were ready to head home, one of them was missing. This was the next morning and there was a major search in progress.

It was a gray day and slippery underfoot and the lady hiking with us twisted her ankle and couldn't continue. Somehow we got the attention of the police boat and it met us at High Dump then took us to Cabot Head. Later on that day, the lost chap walked out of the bush about three or four hundred yards from where he had last been seen. For over fifty years an 'idea' for a trail has become an institution. For its entire length it has become a major tourist attraction and almost every

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municipality it touches mentions it in their advertising. I'm not sure about this but I don't think any of them give the Bruce Trail much financial support. Thankfully thousands of broader-minded organizations and individuals have kept the Trail intact and financially sound. In recent years the leadership of CEO Beth Gillespy has been an inspiration to all of us.

If Phil Gosling is correct in his booklet about the beginnings of the Trail then the first guide book was published in 1965 and I still have a copy. To illustrate how the 'idea' has grown and flourished, the first 19 pages would be of interest for all to read if it were reprinted. Those pages give an introduction to the Trail and how to use it, the formation of about ten clubs and a short description of each of them. The fee structure is on page 11. Talk about inflation! Pages 15 to 17 cover how to use the guide book and page 19 is information about the publication of the Bruce Trail Guide Book, which was copyrighted in July 1965.



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FOR THE BIRDS

2024 ART SALE FUNDRAISER

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

The Peninsula Bruce Trail Club is inviting artists to support its conservation and education projects related to bird species at risk and protection of bird habitat on the Saugeen (Bruce) Peninsula.

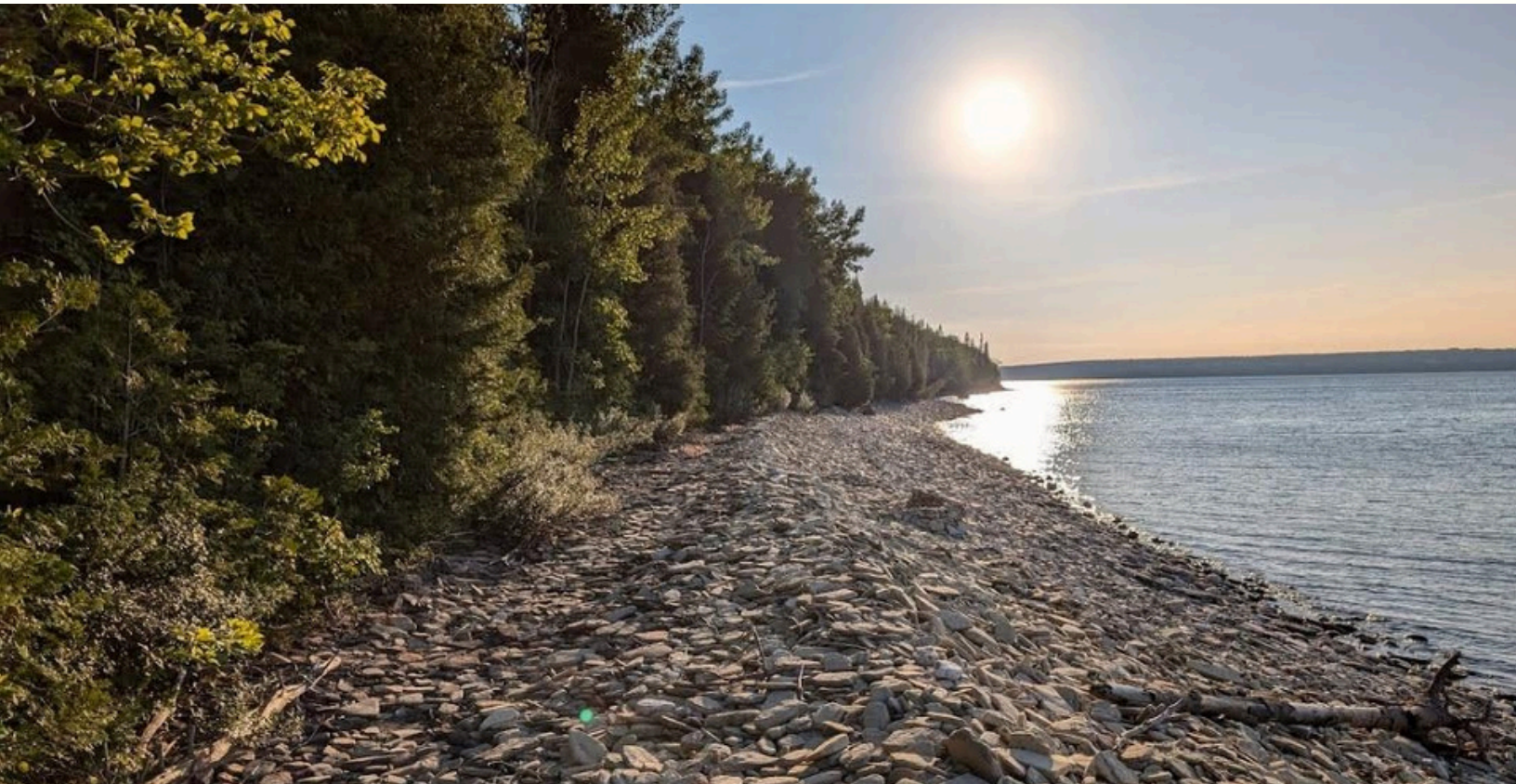
If you are a painter, sculptor, potter or any other type of visual artist, we would like to hear from you!

Please contact pbtcforbthebirds@gmail.com if you would be interested in donating a work of art to this important cause

For more information, visit:
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SUNRISE SHORES NATURE RESERVE

Sunrise Shores Nature Reserve

BY JOHN WHITWORTH
BTC CLUB REPRESENTATIVE

I am pleased to announce that the Bruce Trail Conservancy has secured the Sunrise Shores property at Rush Cove. We are grateful to the Clark family for working with us to make this happen, as well as for many years of hosting the trail on a handshake basis.

This 64-acre property includes 640 metres of stony beach along Georgian Bay, along with classic escarpment topography - a talus slope leading up to a vertical 50m cliff, with heavily forested lands on the cliff tops. The forest is classified as interior forest - remote enough to provide scarce habitat for bears, fishers and other wildlife.

Those familiar with the trail in this area will recall that the trail climbs 1.3 km up Rush Cove Road before turning North into the bush. Trail Directors John Grandy & Tom Hall are already exploring potential improved trail routes that will take advantage of the property while eliminating yet another road walk.



JOHN GRANDY, BRIAN POPELIER,
AND TOM HALL

these and other lands is simply that future owners (as is their right) may not be as generous in sharing the land.

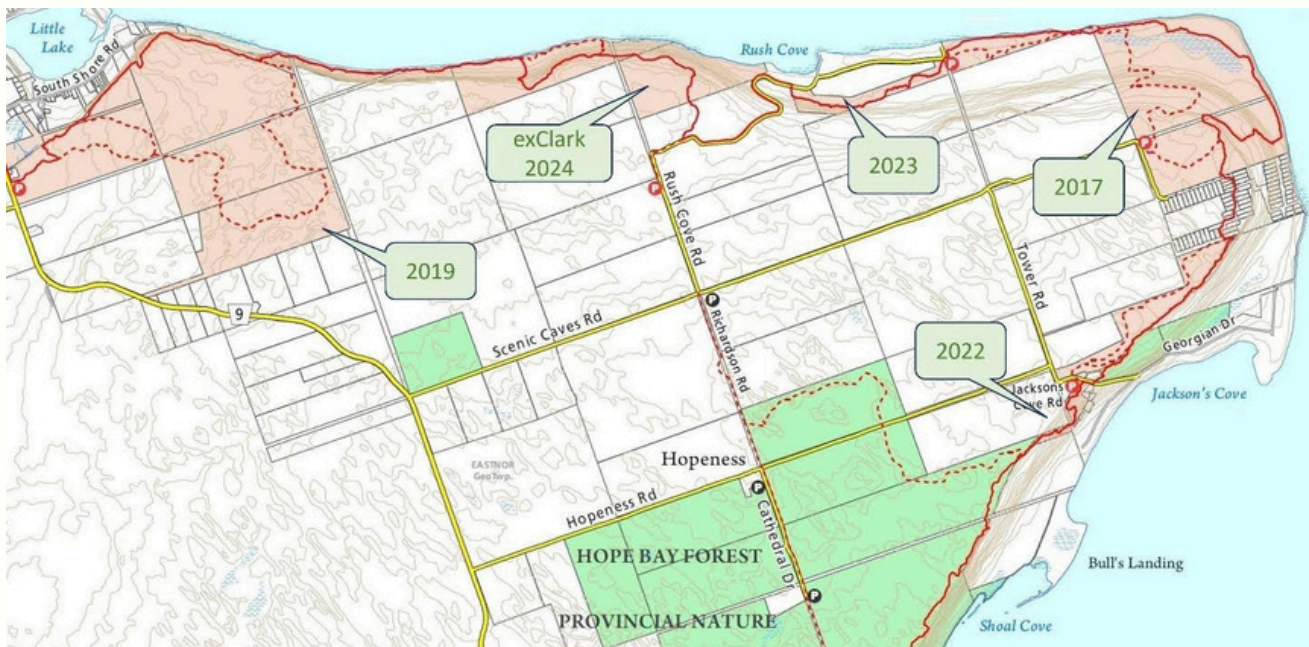
The map below illustrates recent progress in the Hope Bay to Barrow Bay corridor. Few gaps (the white spaces) remain in this 23km section of trail. From the archives: BT Map Edition 27 (2012) shows a 10km road-walk from Rush Cove to Barrow Bay. Not many end-to-enders miss this!

None of this improvement is possible without the cooperation of the land owners and the generous support of the BTC's donors.

The BTC mission is to promote Conservation of the Niagara Escarpment by facilitating responsible public access to this unique landscape. Our strategy is to secure a continuous 900km conservation corridor containing the Bruce Trail. The BTC benefits from landowners kindly sharing their lands via a handshake agreement. (currently 600 across 9 BTC Clubs - with a dozen such agreements in PBTC). The need to secure



BLACK BEARS AT SUNRISE SHORES





Amaya's Birding Story

A JUNIOR BIRDER SHARES HER STORY

My name is Amaya. I live in Las Planas near Barcelona, Spain. I am nine years old. I am visiting my aunt and uncle in Larsen Cove. For my birder badge we went on the Bruce Trail at Otter Lake. We saw a lot of birds that I have never seen and it was really nice. I liked the big

platform because you could clearly see birds on the lake and birds flying over. I really like blue jays but I don't see them in Barcelona. We heard them squawking and I love the colour of them. I really like that my aunt invited me to get my Junior Birder badge.

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**Bruce Trail
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PENINSULA CLUB

The more a person spends time on the Bruce Trail hiking, the higher the probability that, at some point, they will have a new or unexpected encounter with nature.

Trouble on the Trail – Forces of Nature

BY TAMARA WILSON
PBTC PRESIDENT

Hiking on the Bruce Trail often exposes us to new experiences that we would not typically encounter in our everyday lives or even on trails in more urban centers. Ninety-eight percent of the time, nature delivers exactly what we planned for. Most times, our hikes go off without a hitch or even better than expected if some delightful encounter with nature occurs. But the other 2% of the time, we



MAMMATUS CLOUDS

encounter situations that may be startling, scary, or may fall under the category of an unplanned incident.

Some of these stories you may have heard from fellow hikers, experienced yourselves, or shared over a beverage after a great day on the Trails. The fact is, the more time you spend on the Trails, the greater the chances are that you will encounter something unexpected. I am dividing these experiences into two categories. Part 1 for the Issue 2 of The Rattler will discuss unexpected situations involving nature, including weather, wild animals, or plants and trees. Part 2 is

argeted for Issue 3 of The Rattler and will discuss unexpected situations involving people and their pets.

Regardless of the source of an emergency, it is important to have the “What3Words” App on your phone, if not for you, then to help others in distress that you may encounter. It is nearly impossible to clearly recite the string of GPS coordinates to a dispatcher in an emotionally charged situation, or over sketchy cell service. What3Words facilitates location sharing immensely. Also, don’t assume that someone else will call the situation in. EMS services will never be angry at you for calling in what you think is a genuine issue. If someone else has called in the same situation, the dispatcher will often let you know that they are already aware and may even provide an update on the status (i.e., “EMS has been dispatched and is investigating the situation”). No one will think worse of you for calling in a genuine concern. If you aren’t sure, let the EMS or hike group expert make the call as to whether a call is warranted.



WHAT3WORDS APP



SOS ON AN EMERGENCY SATELLITE LOCATOR

Another great safety device to carry on hikes is an emergency satellite locator (see IMG 2373). There are several products on the market, but an example is the Garmin In Reach Mini (see IMG 2374; if in trouble, press SOS), which allows hikers to send and receive text messages, can provide localized weather reports, and can send out an SOS to Garmin’s emergency response center via satellite from anywhere in the world. This is a particularly useful device to carry when doing solo hiking in remote areas but is also a good tool to carry in groups as well. It is important to ensure devices are charged before heading out. These types of devices can be used on kayaking and boating trips as well.

Without further ado, here are some situations a hiker could encounter on the trails when Nature delivers the unexpected.

Wild Animals on the Trails

Both humans and wild animals like using the Bruce Trail. Most wild animals, however, want nothing to do with hikers. If hikers are making some degree of sound on the trail, most animals will clear the way and stand aside, hide, or take another route to avoid a confrontation. Some wild animals have poor eyesight and may inadvertently walk towards a hiker until they realize a person is up ahead. I once watched a porcupine, deep in thought, slowly amble towards me on the Trail. I stopped to see how close it would get before it realized I was there. It was likely around 5 meters away when it raised its head to see me standing there, nearly jumping off the ground in the process. The visibly startled porcupine did an abrupt turn and quickly left in the opposite direction, eventually heading off the Trail to climb a tree to safety. Note: the porcupine was not attacking, and porcupines do not shoot their quills. This was an innocent encounter on the trail and reminds hikers that it is important to give wild animals the space to escape and get away from us.



A PORCUPINE TAKES A MOMENT TO FIGURE OUT WHAT I AM DOING ON ITS BRUCE TRAIL. AFTER A MOMENT, IT OPTED TO LEAVE THE AREA

Rattlesnakes will most often rattle to give a hiker a warning that they are in the area. Baby rattlesnakes do not have their rattles developed, and though they shake their tails, they will not make a buzzing sound. In a baby rattlesnake's early days, however, they do hang out with their parents, and the parents will rattle. If you hear buzzing, it is important to stop, be perfectly still, and determine where the rattle sound is coming from. Rattlesnakes are very well camouflaged, so it may take a minute or two to locate the snake on the ground. Once the snake is located, move away and around from the area.

On the Peninsula, it's important to always listen for the high-pitched buzz and avoid getting too engrossed in conversation with fellow hikers. Hikers should be aware of the sound of the wind, which could make the buzzing rattle difficult to hear.

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If you encounter a rattlesnake on the Trail, give it a wide berth and walk well around it, even if it means temporarily going off-trail to continue your hike. It's helpful to add this sighting on iNaturalist under the Bruce Trail Projects. If the rattlesnake regularly hangs out in this location, the BTC Ecologists may investigate further and suggest rerouting the Trail around that spot.

If you encounter other hikers, you may want to give them a heads up that you just walked around a rattlesnake. Rattlesnakes don't want an encounter either, though, and will often move on after you're gone. If it seems that a rattlesnake is startled and coming towards you, you're likely standing between it and the path to its den. If the rattlesnake approaches, back up until the snake can make its way to its home (this will likely be off-trail) and once it's gone, proceed on your hike, giving the snake's exit point a wide berth.



A RATTLESNAKE IS LEAVING THE AREA AFTER RATTLING AND MAKING ITS PRESENCE KNOWN. ALLOW WILDLIFE SPACE TO LEAVE AND DON'T FOLLOW

If you are bitten, call 911 for instructions. They may ask you to seek medical help at one of the emergency medical facilities in Lions Head or Wiarton within 24 hours of the bite, or they may send EMS to meet you at an agreed-upon location. The Medical Centre in Tobermory offers regular office hours for medical staff only. Both Lions Head and Wiarton have 24-hour walk-in Emergency Centres. Not all bites are venomous, and the bite could be quite small, but it's best to let a medical professional decide on the next steps.

The Peninsula has a healthy population of bears. Most Peninsula bears enjoy the copious amounts of wild apples that grow in the area as part of their normal diet. Beyond the apples, there are many sources of natural food for Peninsula bears to eat, so people are not generally on their menu. It's important for hikers to familiarize themselves with Bearwise protocols as described by the [Ontario Government's site](#).

Many communities along the Peninsula have bear situations that they are trying to manage. The bears become community problems when they associate residential waste and food left in vehicles as eligible sources of food. This has resulted in making some bears very bold when it comes to interactions with humans and not always easily scared away. If you see a bear, it's important to make noise so that the bear knows you're there. Always give the bear space to get away from you. If the bear doesn't run away, sees you but ignores you, it's best to avoid the bear and leave the area.

Bears stay with their mothers for about 1.5 years. Avoid an area if you see a mother bear with its young. Sometimes young bears don't behave appropriately, and their curiosity may get the better of them. If they are still with their mothers and youngsters decide to check out the hiker, the mother bear will not like the



A YOUNG BEAR IS BUSY EATING GRASS AT OTTER LAKE NATURE RESERVE BUT IS ALSO NOT AFRAID OF US EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE MADE NOISE. WE KEEP AN EYE ON THE BEAR, WHO IS VERY FOCUSED ON EATING GRASS, AND WE HIKE AWAY AND AROUND THE GRAZING BEAR, ENSURING NOT TO DISTURB IT FURTHER

hiker interfering with her family and may become aggressive. If a young bear has recently left its den as the mother is working on a new family or the bear is orphaned, the hiker could find that they have company on the Trail with the young bear "hanging out." Out of curiosity, a young bear may follow a hiker to see what the hiker is up to. Even if a hiker shouts or speaks loudly, the young bear may disappear and reappear ahead or behind on the Trail. This is very unnerving, but as a responsible hiker, it is important to continue to speak loudly, do not try to befriend the bear, feel sorry for the bear, or make contact. Definitely do not feed the bears any food. It is important that bears remain wild and wary of people.

Bears may bluff-charge if they feel threatened or need to assert their presence. Though bears often run away, hikers shouldn't assume they will if they make noise. If a hiker sees a bear, they should stop and not continue to approach. Give the bear space and time to react to their presence. A bluff charge is a natural defensive bear behavior warning the person to go away. If the bear bluffs (charges forward and/or

swats the ground with its paws), it's important to remove yourself from their area. If they're up ahead between you and your destination, you may need to turn around and find an alternate way to your vehicle. If on a dirt road, ask a passing motorist to help you through the area past the bear or join a larger group that may be more successful in scaring the bear away.

If a bear is in a tree, it's trying to get away from you. It's important to leave the bear alone, continue on your hike, and leave the area as quickly as possible. It's important to remember that hikers are guests in the bears' home.

Wildlife that is diseased or sick may also behave unpredictably. It's important to avoid contact and report sick animals to the authorities. It's always a good idea to warn other hikers of situations they could encounter up ahead. Ontario's recommendations for sick or injured animals can be found at the link provided below. Report the animal to the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative (CWHC): by phone at 1-866-673-4781 or on their [website](#). If you think you have been bitten or have been in close contact with any wild animal, seek medical attention as soon as possible.

The Peninsula Section has also started to see the appearance of deer ticks. It's important to always check your body and your pet for ticks after a hike. Prevention is a hiker's best defense against tick bites: cover up, use gaiters, and tuck pants into socks. Having a lint roller in the car and rolling clothes after a hike can be a good way of removing ticks on clothing. Ticks can also hide under the zipper flaps on zip-off hiking pants. Check seams on clothing too. See below for the Ontario Government's latest information on ticks and what to do. Tick kits can be purchased from the BTC website store - see link below.



A DEER TICK FOUND CRAWLING ON BARE SKIN AFTER A HIKE THROUGH CAPE CHIN MAIN TRAIL. WHERE THERE ARE DEER, THERE WILL BE DEER TICKS

Finally, though the Bruce Trail was created by humans, local wildlife are opportunists and will gladly use any stairs, platforms, or infrastructure that has been created to help hikers as it helps them move around as well. Sometimes you will find porcupine quills or different kinds of scat on stairs that scale the escarpment. Animals use these hiking structures too! As hikers, we must remember that the wildlife who live in the forests have the ultimate right of way on the Trails, structures, and stairs. We can all enjoy the Trails if we make space for one another.

Weather

It is becoming more difficult to predict inclement weather when conditions can change dramatically over a day or even overnight. What looks like minor rainfall before heading to bed can join with other systems to become a torrential downpour by the time morning rolls around. This is particularly challenging for hikers who try to do the right thing by planning ahead, booking campsites months in advance, and then trying to execute their well-planned trips. Weather can quickly turn a great hike into a disaster.

The limestone rocks on the Peninsula can get slippery after a rain or if they freeze in spring, fall, and winter. In cases where the Peninsula has tornado warnings, winds can easily reach 100 km/h, which can make navigating with a backpack very treacherous. Hikers should be aware of local “Shelter in Place” directives and not continue their hike if this should happen. Also, be aware that a climate emergency may not be in the immediate area of the hike, but EMS services may be busy in another area of the Peninsula helping others. If a hiker is injured during a weather event, EMS services may not be able to reach the hiker for hours or until other local issues are resolved.

EMS services are scarce on the Peninsula and often covered by local volunteers. Visitors are asked to be aware through the local radio stations and links provided below and ensure they are responsible for their own safety.



WINTER IS A GOOD TIME TO APPRECIATE HOW WILD ANIMALS USE THE TRAILS TOO THOUGH THIS FOX WAS NOT HIKING IN A STRAIGHT LINE



TO HIKE OR NOT TO HIKE? THOSE LOOK LIKE MAMMATUS CLOUDS, WHICH MEANS THERE IS A CHANCE OF HAIL, HEAVY RAIN, AND LIGHTNING IN THE VICINITY. THIS IS THE MOST UNSTABLE FORM OF CUMULONIMBUS CLOUDS AND MAY WARRANT A DELAY IN HEADING OUT.

Fire

Much like the weather scenario, instructions for evacuation or “Shelter in Place” due to fires will be shared over the local radio stations. If a hiker has a question regarding the smell of smoke in the air and cannot access the radio or information, they should ask a local resident, a Parks employee, or a shop owner for clarification. It is important to take positive and safe actions that align with the local directives from EMS services.

As a hiker in a remote area, if you come across smoldering roots (the fire could be in the cracks, crevices, or caves underground), a tree that has been hit by lightning, or an unattended campfire, immediately call 911. Though a hiker thinks they have extinguished a deserted campfire, the fire may have expanded to areas underground. Fires are considered very seriously on the Peninsula, and your call will be very much appreciated. No fire is too small to report.

Trees and Plants

The Peninsula Club encourages hikers to report all trail maintenance issues, including downed trees across the trail and hung trees that could fall on the trail and possibly injure a passing hiker. Always consider the trees above the trail as well as what is happening on the trail. If a tree branch is hung above the trail, walk around its fall zone. Be particularly aware of the status of trees above and around the trail in high wind circumstances. Hikers may want to reconsider a hike in forested areas if it is a very windy day. Pests like the emerald ash borer have created many dead forest trees that can break and fall in high winds.

The Peninsula Club has over one hundred volunteers who help maintain the trails and a team of certified sawyers who can safely cut down problem trees.



PENINSULA CLUB SAWYERS HAVE THE EQUIPMENT AND SKILLS TO SAFELY REMOVE PROBLEMATIC TREES.



POISON IVY IS NOT ALWAYS LOW TO THE GROUND . IT CAN GROW IN WAIST HIGH BUSHES OR ALONG ROCK FACES AS VINES

The club and the trail captains take trail maintenance very seriously, and reports are much appreciated. The Bruce Trail App has a great reporting option for sharing the location and photos of problem trees or issues on the trail. If you do not have the app, a quick email describing the location (use the What3Words app, GPS, a landmark identifier, or a localized trail description) and sending the information to trailreportsbptc@gmail.com is very helpful for the PBTC Trail Maintenance Team.

Hikers should be aware of poison ivy on the trails and know how to identify it in all its forms. Some people have more severe reactions to the oils on and in the plant than others. Rashes can sometimes last for weeks and be extremely itchy. Hikers should avoid wearing shorts and exposing bare skin to the leaves, which in some places line both sides of the trail. In some sections, poison ivy has formed a vine and is on the cliff faces or is growing out of the cliffs. Be aware of this characteristic as you descend or ascend the escarpment

trails—poison ivy could be at face or shoulder level! Always be aware of where you place your hands, your hiking poles if you lay them down, and where you take your bio-breaks. Be careful of washing your hiking clothes in soapy water in a separate wash from your other clothes afterward. Also, be aware that poison ivy can transfer to pet fur. Hikers are encouraged to wash their dog or pet in a soapy bath after their hikes where there has been poison ivy as well. Some hikers carry a squirt bottle of soapy water and a towel in their cars to spray down sections of their bodies (or their pets) before heading home. Not all sections of the Peninsula Section of the Bruce Trail have poison ivy, but there are some places where it is prolific. Note that because poison ivy is a native plant in Ontario, it is not considered an invasive species and is considered a natural part of the environment.

In closing, the more a person spends time on the Bruce Trail hiking, the higher the probability that, at some point, they will have a new or unexpected encounter with nature. Rest assured that other seasoned hikers most likely have had similar experiences. It is important to take account of your own safety and select options that will result in the best outcome for your hike. If you have an interesting story to share regarding a unique or unusual encounter with nature on the trail, please share it at pbtc.funclubpres@gmail.com. Stay safe and happy hiking!

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Before You Hike

RESOURCES



WILD LIFE

- [Bear Wise Website](#)
- [Sick or Injured Animals](#)
- [Tick Information](#)
- [Bruce Trail Conservancy Tick Kits](#)
- [Environment Canada South Bruce Peninsula](#)



WEATHER

- [Environment Canada Tobermory](#)
- [Environment Canada Northern Lake Huron](#)
- [Environment Canada Wiarton](#)
- [Parks Canada weather page](#)
- Face mist to stay hydrated Insect repellent



RADIO FREQUENCIES:

- Parks Canada Weather and Activities
- Information channel is 90.7 FM.
- Other channels include:
- C.B.C. (Toronto) : 98.7 FM
- CFOS (Owen Sound) : 560 AM
- CIXK (Owen Sound) : 106.5 FM



MEDICAL FACILITIES

- [Grey Bruce Health Services - Tobermory](#)
7275 Hwy 6, Tobermory (519) 596-2305
- [Grey Bruce Health Services - Lions Head](#)
22 Moore St, Lions Head (519) 793-3424
- [Grey Bruce Health Services - Wiarton](#)
369 Mary St, Wiarton ON (519) 534-1260



OTHER TIPS

- During your National park visit, tune to local weather radio: 90.7FM
- Lake Huron and Georgian Bay have a moderating effect on local climate
- Summer temperatures can be cool, especially near the water or at night. Pack a light jacket or windbreaker
- Waves and storms can develop quickly. Boaters and swimmers should use caution and monitor weather forecasts. If camping, bring a tarp in case of rain.
- Early spring, late autumn and winter weather can be highly variable. Contact the park for specific advice if planning trips at these times of year.
- Trees or Trail maintenance issues, email: trailreportsbptc@gmail.com.



New Bootscrubbers Installed

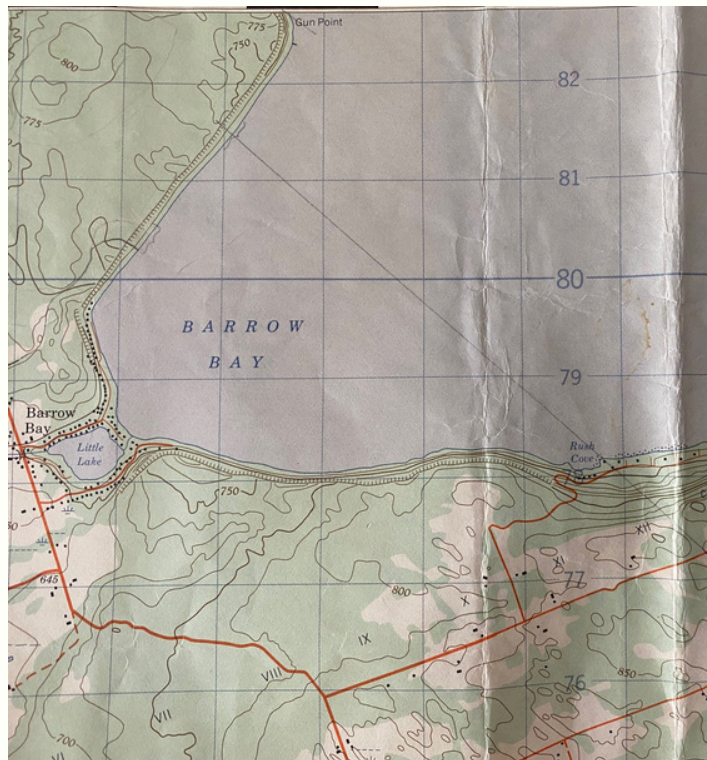
THANKS TO THE BPSA FOR THEIR ONGOING SUPPORT!

The Bruce Peninsula Sportsmen's Association (BPSA) has generously donated and installed a new boot scrubber on the south side of Dyers Bay Road, at the north end of the Dyers Bay Cliffs Nature Reserve. This joins about 30 other BPSA-donated boot scrubbers found along the Bruce Trail on the peninsula.

We extend our sincere thanks to the BPSA for their continued support and to the land stewards for maintaining these valuable tools. Later this month, we'll also be receiving five new boot scrubbers donated by Baffin.

Hikers are encouraged to use boot scrubbers before hitting the trail to remove any potentially invasive plant materials from their boots. This simple step helps protect the delicate ecosystem of the Bruce Trail.

We never imagined, but could have guessed, that this loop would become immensely popular.



THE ORIGINAL MAP USED TO DETERMINE THE TRAIL ROUTE

Opening the Gunn Point Loop Trail

BY ED DOADT
BTC VOLUNTEER TRAILBLAZER

Since its inception, the Bruce Trail connected Lion's Head to Barrow Bay by traversing the forest across the base of Gunn Point. In the early days, most of the trail's route was established by agreement with the appropriate landowners, but these agreements were not in place for the perimeter of Gunn Point.

Through work done and purchases made by the MNR, blocks of Gunn Point were becoming secured, and in the 1980s, when the critical pieces were in place, permission was received to re-route the

trail onto, or at least close to, the optimum route, along the escarpment edge, from the existing trail in Lion's Head to the existing trail at Barrow Bay.

The call went out from veteran Bruce Trail volunteer coordinator Ross McLean, and on a cool weekend one fall, a team was assembled at the Lion's Head campground. Because I had done some previous explorations in that area on foot and by cross-country skis, Ross asked me to join him for the initial flagging of the new route. In those pre-GPS days, all of this flagging was done with map and compass and "by eye." With flagging tape in hand, Ross and I set off. Our goal was to at least get the new route flagged so that we could return the next spring to open the trail. There were already some casual trails in the area near Lions Head, so the initial work was to select the best of these, keeping in mind the property lines

we needed to respect. Our plan was to develop a "scalped" trail that offered viewpoints from the scarp edge but also traversed the forests.

During a lunch break, Ross and I could hear the trail clearing crew as they followed along behind us, almost nipping at our heels. We were thankful that the route we had flagged was a good one because it wasn't long before that initial portion was opened. We were mindful of the 45th parallel geodetic marker that existed on the peninsula, as well as MacKay's harbor, which I had explored by ski on previous trips, and tried to build in access to those locations.

By mid-afternoon, Ross and I emerged on the escarpment edge, overlooking Barrow Bay, but where were we exactly? By triangulation with compass and map, we plotted our position and returned to base camp, very much content with the work that had been accomplished that day.

An interesting aside: Ross had just returned from a successful hiking trip to the harsh climate and terrain of Baffin Island, where his gear had performed flawlessly. Ironically, it was on this trailblazing weekend, when a sudden storm blew in one night, collapsing his and some other tents. We ended up spending that night in the Beach Motel, through the generosity of the owner.

The next spring, we hiked the new route to the point overlooking Barrow Bay and completed both the flagging and the clearing of what would come to be known as the Lion's Head Loop Trail. The "old" route (now parts of the Maitland Warder and Ilsa Hanel Side Trails) became the shortcut, so hikers could complete the loop from either side.

We never imagined, but could have guessed, that this loop would become immensely popular, and through the work

of subsequent trail captains and others, our original route had been tweaked and fine-tuned, with side trails and viewpoints that make it one of the most magnificent additions to the Bruce Trail.

The late Ross McLean and I worked together on numerous projects and on multiple "Go To Blazes" weekends on the Bruce Peninsula, but we both agreed that the Gunn Point Loop was our finest work.

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 Courtesy: Benjamin Hutton Photography

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*A handshake deal blazed
the way for the Bruce
Trail in the Peninsula*

From the Tour du Mont Blanc to the Peninsula Bruce Trail

BY TAMARA WILSON
PBTC PRESIDENT

As volunteer President of the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club, I enjoy learning about new ways to make and shape the Peninsula Section of the Bruce Trail into a more sustainable and enjoyable footpath for hikers and local communities alike. In



HIGHEST POINT ON THE MAIN TMB, GRAND
COL FERRET PASS

June 2024, my husband, Tim, and I completed a twelve-day hike on the Tour du Mont Blanc (TMB), a 170 km Trail that circumnavigates the Mont Blanc massif that straddles France, Italy and Switzerland. The TMB main trail reaches its highest point at the Grand Col Ferret pass at 2537 m in elevation.



THE ICONIC REFUGIO WALTER BONATTI IN ITALY

At 170km, the TMB is a similar length to the Peninsula Section of the Bruce Trail but provides an accumulated 9000m of leg pumping climbs over its course. For reference, one climb of the CN tower is approximately 500m. The TMB as we know it today, incorporates ancient Celtic routes, old Roman roads, goat paths and people paths, alike.

In the late 1960's, about the time that the Bruce Trail was being created, European alpine hiking experienced a boom and consequently, the current route was established.

With an estimated 200,000 people hiking, running and biking the TMB annually, it is considered the most popular long-distance hike in Europe. How does the Bruce Trail Peninsula Section stack up to Europe's favourite hiking Trail and what could we learn from this well established route?

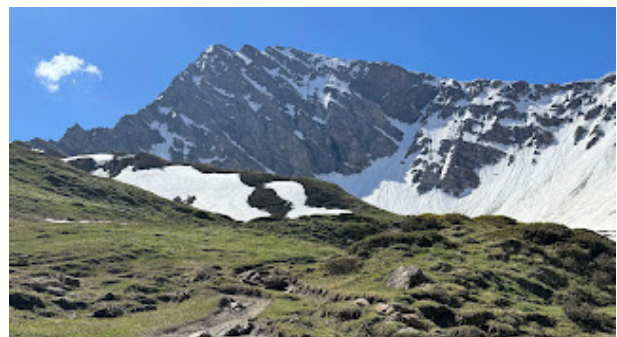
The TMB Climate Change Pivot

On our first day, we decided to bypass the opening 1000m, double CN tower

climb by taking the Bellevue Cable Car from the official starting point in Les Houches, France.

Decorating the walls of the building, were the glory days of Olympic skiing, including photos of Canadians, Nancy Green and Ken Read.

Chatting with locals, we learned that the revenues brought by hikers, were critical for the local economy that was suffering from progressively shorter ski seasons. This mirrored the shift we have seen on the Peninsula as well, as the Club has been able to move into more four-season programming, from just hiking to include snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.





HIKING AN ALPINE RIM

Accommodation

The TMB has a [wonderful website](#) and interactive map where early planners can book their mountain refuges well in advance at a distance matching their daily goals. TMB hikers who wish to camp, must stay in designated campgrounds. The Bruce Trail is in early discussions on expanding its offerings of Overnight Rest Areas along the Trail but in the meantime, there is a list available on the [BTC site](#) that will hikers started.

Protecting Biodiversity

Once we were on the Trail, we quickly learned that the TMB is an alpine trail that runs through natural areas and pastureland. The Bruce Trail is a wilderness trail. The two are different. To illustrate, as budding birders, we arrived in France with the “Europe West” bird pack loaded onto our Merlin ID App. Merlin Bird ID is a fantastic app that will listen to the surrounding birdsong and list the birds in the area that are singing, chirping and squawking. We imagined all

of the many new birds that we would encounter on our alpine hike. Alas, this was not to materialize and highlighted one of the big differences between the two 170km Trails. Instead, we picked up an underwhelming ten birds on our eleven-day hike! In contrast, it is not unheard of for Bruce Trail hikers to achieve their 100 birder badge (ie identify one hundred different species of birds) on their End to Ends of the Peninsula Section, particularly during spring migration. Though many TMB hikers gushed about the beautiful bird song, (Merlin identifying two: the Common chaffinch and the Eurasian blackbird – both prolific songsters) and the abundant wildlife (the many groundhog-like marmots), hikers



LEAVING LES HOUCHES



LEAVE BOOTS, POLES AND SOMETIMES PACKS IN THE EQUIPMENT ROOMS. SLIP ON THE CROCS PROVIDED

familiar with the biodiversity experienced on the Bruce Trail, may leave not so impressed. Make no mistake, the views on the TMB are jaw dropping and the spring wildflowers were spectacular. But there are no large animals on the TMB, like bear, and the greatest wildlife threat on the TMB are the marmots. For hikers who have done wilderness treks, the Bruce Trail has more to offer when it comes to nature.

The History of the Trails

The TMB is trying to promote its alpine trekking history in a series of nicely presented signs along the French portion of the Trail. The BTC is also on a journey of sharing its different levels of history including its partnership with Plenty Canada, identifying locations of First Nation cultural experience plus, the launch of a Founders series of Trail sections where posted stories will document the early contributors to the Trail. The Peninsula Section is developing the stories and information behind the named Side Trails to share on its website.

Both Trails agree that history is important. In recent years, the Club has focussed on highlighting the significant historical contributions of Saugeen Ojibway Nation: the Chippewa's of Nawash and the Chippewas of Saugeen.

The sharing of First Nation history and culture on the Bruce Trail is another area that makes the Peninsula Section globally unique.

Potable Water

The TMB does a great job of making potable water accessible to hikers. Though initially unsure, we soon learned that water coming from spouts pouring into hollowed out logs was fine to drink. Pack weight is a key consideration when planning hikes and water gets a high priority in weight calculations. With the tough daily climbs, TMB hikers feel every one of their pack decisions and thankfully, water is commonly available in every little community, refuge and farmstead along the way



HEADED TO REFUGE FIOUX ON OUR FIRST NIGHT



CLOSE THE CATTLE GATE BEHIND US



DOCUMENTING ALPINE TREKKING HISTORY

This means hikers may only need to carry one liter or so (one kilogram) of water to see them between fill ups. This is an area where we could improve for the Peninsula Bruce Trail hikers. Unlike the TMB, a hiker relying on a local water supply like Georgian Bay would in all cases along the Peninsula need a life straw or some reliable method of water purification.

Demographics

On the TMB, being in our mid-sixties, we were the old folks on the Trail. The TMB was used by young people in their 20's and 30's all of whom graciously accommodated our slower pace. We became accustomed to stepping aside to let the young people speed ahead of us either briskly hiking or trail running. During our tour, the trail runners posed no issues for the slower hikers even when we were down to a single file due to snow and would often even stop to chat. Though historically the Peninsula Club has not offered trail running on its hike schedule, the TMB and the trail runners we encountered, presented another very positive perspective regarding this footpath activity.



READILY AVAILABLE DRINKING WATER

Trail Conditions

Finally, we found the TMB to be more “adventurous” than the Bruce Trail. Above 2100m elevations, Tim and I routinely found ourselves following individual icy footsteps embedded in the sharply angled slopes. (See IMG 1227) In these places, progress was slow as we nestled our micro spikes into each singular footprint, ensuring three points of contact with our poles. Our caution was not unfounded. Unfortunately, deaths do happen every year on the TMB as hikers fall victim to collapsing ice bridges or falls.

As rescues are a realistic consideration, before embarking on the TMB, hikers are encouraged to ensure their health insurance covers the bill for any type of rescue as it assumed insurance will cover all costs. Trekkers are expected to know their own limitations, research trail conditions and take responsibility for the possible results of their trek.

There are expensive remote rescues that happen every year on the Peninsula.



WE TRIED TO HIT THE SNOW PACK AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE

Section of the Bruce Trail as well. Currently, the costs of rescues are absorbed by local Peninsula taxpayers, though Municipal by-laws allow the Fire Chief to charge all or a portion of the extraction and rescue costs to those being rescued.

Closing thoughts

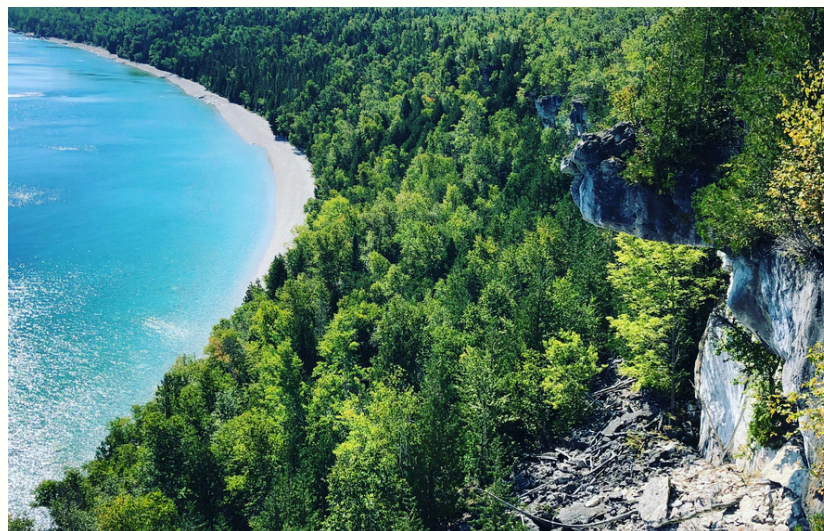
Admittedly, 200,000 visitors hiking the 170km of the Peninsula Section of the Bruce Trail each year would be a lot. TMB numbers could jeopardize our key success factors, such as biodiversity, conservation, and critical relationships with SON and local communities. We need to protect the factors that help make the Peninsula Section of the Bruce Trail globally unique.

As I scan through social media, Japanese trails are promoting hikes “anywhere but Mt Fuji” to protect biodiversity; Barcelona residents are squirting tourists with waterguns in protests and Greece is closing archeological sites in extreme heat. Global conditions for tourism is changing. With the Peninsula’s exceptional biodiversity, spectacular

Views and temperate climate, visitors who enjoy outdoor activities will indeed be attracted here. Collaborating on platforms such as the MNP’s Sustainable Tourism Advisory Group and the regions’ Chambers of Commerce, the Peninsula Club will continue to do our part to share critical messaging and help control visitor traffic. With our eye on the sustainable enjoyment of trails, the Peninsula Section of the Bruce Trail aims to retain its natural advantages that make it a world class hiking destination.



AN ICE BRIDGE THAT HAS HAD TRAIL COLLAPSED



ON THE BRUCE TRAIL, PENINSULA SECTION.

Tobermory Trail Race: A Runner's Paradise

BY LES MCBETH
PBTC COMMUNICATIONS
DIRECTOR

This past weekend, I had the privilege of participating in the Tobermory Trail Race Weekend, an event that has rightfully earned its place as my favorite running experience in over two decades of hitting the pavement and trails.

Unmatched Scenery and Community

What sets this race apart is the combination of breathtaking Bruce Trail scenery and the community that has grown around the event.

The full marathon course starts in Tobermory and winds its way along the iconic Bruce Trail, passing by the awe-inspiring Grotto before reaching the turnaround point at Cypress Lake. The half marathon distance begins at Cypress Lake and follows the Bruce Trail back to Tobermory. Last year, the organizers introduced a new 7km course to cater to runners seeking a shorter but equally challenging experience. And if you're looking for a truly unique running experience, don't miss the 5k race on Flowerpot Island, held on Sunday. Imagine running through a stunning island wilderness, surrounded by the beauty of Georgian Bay.



A RUNNER NAVIGATES THE CHALLENGING TERRAIN

A Unique Challenge

As anyone who has traversed the Bruce Trail can attest, this race is a grueling test of endurance and determination. The terrain is challenging, with sections that push even the most seasoned trail runners to their limits. There are always some runners who don't quite know what to expect when they sign up -- despite the best efforts by the organizers to communicate the technical nature of the trail. This year, I met one fellow who summed it up nicely: "I don't know what I was expecting, but it wasn't this!"

Yet, it's precisely this challenge that makes the Tobermory Trail Race so unique and rewarding. Amidst the struggle, I often encounter fellow runners expressing their awe at the scenery, even if they can barely spare a glance away from the trail. The trail is not just a



THE AUTHOR WITH HER SUPPORT CREW AT THE FINISH LINE

physical challenge but also a place of community and camaraderie. As runners chat, share stories, and meet new friends, a wonderful sense of connection emerges. When I ran the full marathon a few years ago, I ended up running with the same woman, Alison, and by the end, we were old pals. Those who have hiked as part of organized hikes with the PBRTC can relate to this experience of making friends on the trail, and running is no different.

Organized with Care

The race is expertly organized by PASA, the Peninsula Adventure Sports Association. They do a phenomenal job of ensuring a smooth and well-run event. PASA's commitment to responsible race management is evident in their partnerships with local organizations like the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club and the National Park. They prioritize minimizing

the race's impact on the environment and community, a message that is clearly communicated to all participants. The safety of racers is also paramount. Before the race, participants are required to watch pre-race safety videos and attend a safety briefing. The incredible volunteers are also instrumental in keeping everyone safe on the trails.

Supporting Local Initiatives


The proceeds from the race directly benefit the Tobermory Primary Place Child Care Centre. In 2023, the event raised a remarkable \$15,195.00, thanks to generous donations from participants, sponsors, and event proceeds. This demonstrates PASA's commitment to reinvesting in the community that hosts this fantastic event.

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The Tobermory Trail Race is a truly exceptional event that showcases the best of the Bruce Trail and the spirit of the running community. It's a challenging but incredibly rewarding experience that leaves a lasting impression on all who participate.

Hit the Trails with PBTC

If the idea of trail running piques your interest, the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club is launching a series of trail running events in the coming months. These hikes/runs aim to introduce a new activity to the Bruce Trail, catering specifically to trail runners of all levels. For more information and to register, visit pbtc.ca/hikes.



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RUNNING PILOT #1**
- 09/21 PENINSULA BLUE SERIES:
MALCOLM BLUFF**
- 09/22 FALL SOLSTICE RAINBOW HIKE**
- 09/26 INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP TRAIL
OFFICIAL OPENING AT CAPE CHIN**
- 09/28 OKTOBERFEST FAMILY & FRIENDS
HIKE – BLUE SERIES**
- 10/6 GINEBEK MIIKAANS**
- 10/6 BRUCE TRAIL DAY: THE BIG LOOP
BRUCE TRAIL HIKE**
- 10/6 WAAZH MIIKAANS HIKE**
- 10/6 MINDFUL WALK IN NATURE
(MCIVER POND)**
- 10/8 SWANS LEISURELY HIKE AT CAPE
CHIN**
- 10/13 PENINSULA BLUE SERIES: SCENIC
LOOP HIKE AT LION'S HEAD**
- 10/17 MOONLIT HIKE SERIES: HUNTER'S
MOON**
- 10/19 RUSH COVE-CAPE DUNDAS LOOP –
PBTC TRAIL RUNNING PILOT #2**
- 10/29 SWANS LEISURELY HIKE AT CAPE
CHIN**

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This month's "From the Archives" features an article written by Ross in 2007 for the Rattler, about his 40-year love affair with the Bruce Trail.



ROSS MCLEAN RECEIVING THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE MEDAL IN 2012

Remembering Ross Ross McLean

(April 25, 1940–May 21, 2020)

BY BRENDA STEWART
BTC ARCHIVIST

The Peninsula Bruce Trail Club has been honored to have many outstanding volunteers over the years, but none have left a written legacy like the late Ross McLean. This month's "From the Archives" features an article written by Ross in 2007 for the Rattler, about his 40-year love affair with the Bruce Trail.

Ross McLean became the Peninsula Club's first Trail Director in 1993, continuing in various roles and as Honorary Director until his retirement from the Board in 2004.

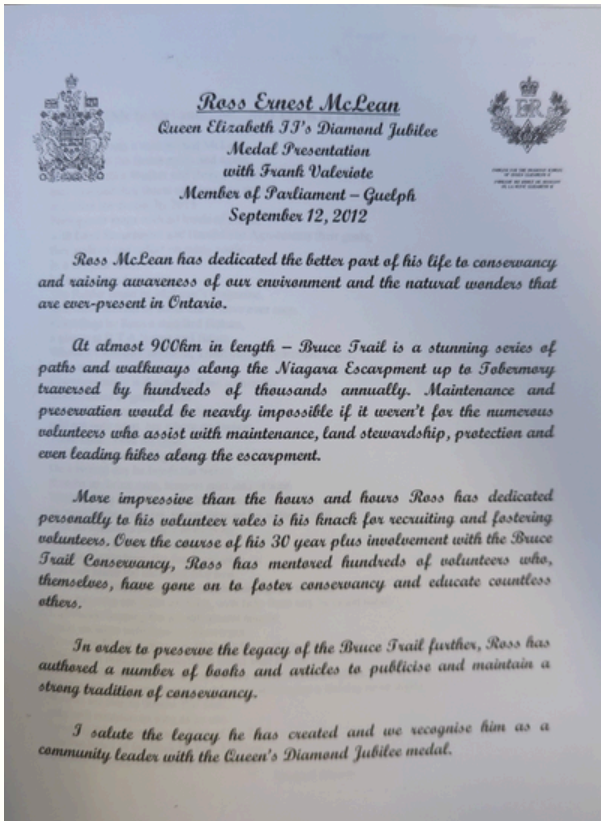
In 2012, Ross received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for his numerous accomplishments.

In addition to the numerous articles he wrote for the Rattler, Ross wrote four books about the history and volunteers of the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club. We are proud to announce that these books have been digitized and will be available to read on the club's website under the history tab.

The following is a short synopsis of each of the books:

Witcheries that Beckon to Quest and Adventure: The Fascination of the Bruce Peninsula and the Bruce Trail, (160 pg.) (2003)

This book was divided into three sections: Natural History of the Bruce Peninsula, Human History of the Bruce and its Stories, and Treasures along the Trail.



ROSS'S QUEEN'S JUBILEE LETTER

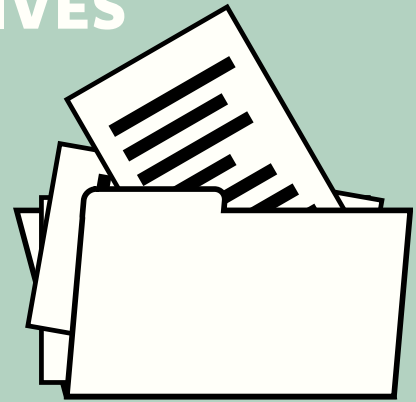
40 Years of Trail Building: The People and Stories of the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club (113 pg.) (2004)

This book details The Pioneers of the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club, The Next Generation; The Trail Builders of the 1980's & 1990's, and Stories from the Past; The History of the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club.

50 to Remember: Reminiscences about Volunteers with the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club over its first 50 years. (73 pg.) (2012)

This book has 50 chapters on 50 volunteers, written for the 50th anniversary of the Bruce Trail. (This book is also available in print to purchase from the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club.)

FROM THE ARCHIVES



The following is an article Ross wrote for the Rattler in 2007, about his 40-year love affair with the Bruce Trail.

Trail Memories in the Bruce Peninsula: More than 30 years of Recollections of Working Towards the Dream, (63 pg.) (2013)

This book is divided into sections of the trail from Wiarton to Tobermory and stories of the trail building.

Please visit our website at pbtc.ca to read any of these fascinating books. We are forever grateful to Ross McLean for preserving the history and stories of the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club, and they will remain a significant part of his legacy.



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THE BT AND ME : REFLECTIONS ON A 40 YEAR LOVE AFFAIR

This spring, the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club nominated me for a 20 year Volunteer Service Award from the Province of Ontario “in honour of [a] commitment to volunteerism.” With the award came autographs from both Bill Murdoch and Dalton McGuinty! (No, that is NOT why I volunteer!)

But the award was sincerely appreciated in its recognition of a lengthy passion for the Niagara Escarpment and the Bruce Trail.

My passion for the beauty of the Niagara Escarpment began in childhood. Although born and raised in Toronto, I spent my boyhood summers in Thornbury with my grandparents who lived at the mouth of the Beaver River. My memories are of a land that was “green and golden”; it was paradisaical to an urban kid. One of my aunts who had to work six days a week and then spent Sunday morning at church on her Sunday afternoons always went on a “ramble” up in the Beaver Valley. At that time there was no Bruce Trail and in such a small community, no concept of trespassing: no local resident would refuse permission to someone he knew who wanted “just” to take a walk. So every week my aunt and I would scramble through the upland forests and across the valley slopes.

As a young adult, I had heard of the “new” Bruce Trail, and wanting to get involved, checked off on my membership application an interest in volunteering. What happened next taught me the most important lesson in volunteer management: the importance of communication! I received no reply to my offer, and thought that either I was not wanted or that there was no shortage. Then five years later, an issue of the *Caledon Comment* (the newsletter of the Caledon Hills Bruce Trail Club) threatened that the publication would end if they could not find a new newsletter editor. I responded with great hesitation; after all, I had been rejected once!

Obviously it had not been a rejection, merely an inadequate job of handling volunteer offers. Because there were no other candidates, I was quickly accepted as editor and what followed was a decade-length commitment with Caledon Hills. Over this period I served the club as Trail Director, BTA Board rep., and Club President.

During this time I became especially interested in new trail development; the concept of the optimum route was just gaining acceptance. One of my friends at that time was Dave Turrell, and the two of us did much of the initial work in laying out the loop trails in Hockley Valley and Mono Cliffs. In the mid-1980’s at a conference at the University of Guelph, as president of Caledon Hills I was presented with a Hike Ontario award for this work. Before this time, much of the emphasis in the Bruce Trail had been on the linear nature of the Trail, not on possible loops for families or single hikers. That new emphasis has continued strongly to this day, and the Peninsula BTC today has perhaps the strongest collection of loop hikes along the entire Trail.

At that time began a passion for the Bruce Peninsula. In the 1980’s, the local club was essentially dormant, and its trail work was divided among four southern clubs. Caledon Hills assumed the most northerly section, and each May would host a “Go To Blazes” weekend, usually based at Cyprus Lake. It was the first of the “big” work parties, often attracting up to 75 trail volunteers. Without this help, the Bruce Trail might have died in the north. The tradition continues today with the Peninsula Club’s “Spruce-Up-The-Bruce” weekend.

It was only natural then that I would get involved in the resurrection of the Peninsula Club in the early 1990’s, organizing the first meeting of the new club in Guelph in 1992. (Why Guelph, you ask? Well, that is where I lived and I could get free accommodation for the meeting. As well, there were almost no members from the Bruce Peninsula in the Peninsula Club which had been basically non-existent for two decades.) To our surprise, about 90 people showed up, all committed to the rebirth of the club.

I became the new club’s first Trail Director and have continued to this day on the Board. I have played a variety of roles but received the greatest satisfaction from coordinating the local Land Securement team of volunteers. There is a lot of pride in the considerable amount of optimum route achieved in the Peninsula over the past few years. Currently

I am called an “Honorary Director”; that may simply mean that I am “over the hill” but at least I can tell people what we “used to do.”

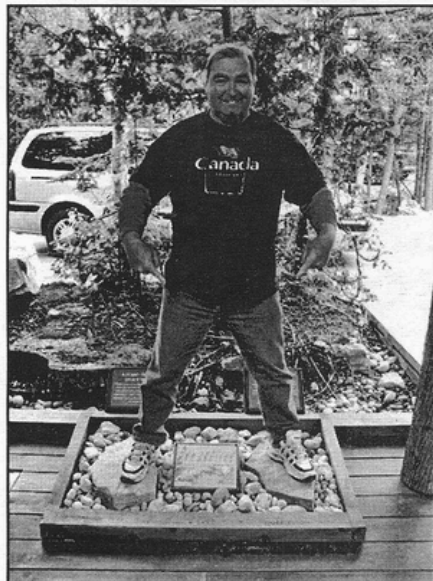
I was always looking for new challenges within the BTA, and in about 2003, along with Chris Walker I accepted an invitation to join the Sydenham Club’s Board of Directors. It was “new turf”, but I was motivated by the energies and vision of people like Cliff Keeling and Ron Savage. What really caught my imagination was the commitment to building the Bayview Extension. As a child I had seen the land that would become the Bayview Escarpment Nature Reserve, and I longed to see that as part of the Bruce Trail. At the end of September of this year, the 60 km of the Bayview Extension will be opened as main Trail. It will be the longest reroute in the history of the Bruce Trail, and it will be a day of celebration.

My commitment to Escarpment preservation and to the Bruce Trail will never end as long as I am still alive. My wife threatens to have inscribed on my tombstone: “He was always looking for the optimum route.” Especially when the call goes out to scout and flag a new trail possibility, I am quick to respond. My greatest dream is to see the return of the main Trail to Rocky Bay and Cabot Head. It may not happen in my lifetime, but someday it too will have a trail corridor which will allow public access to the beauties of this land.

In the spring of 2006, I took on the role of Trail Coordinator for Caledon Hills; that club had difficulty finding someone to accept the role. (Is history repeating itself?) My commitment to them reflects the values that have motivated a lengthy time of volunteerism: a desire to involve a broad-based volunteer team in the work, to achieve a footpath of world-class standards, and to build new Trail on the optimum route whenever possible.

It has been a “fun trip”, and hopefully it will be some time before that tombstone is engraved! Many of the people with whom I have worked, especially in the Peninsula, have become fast friends, but the main attraction has always been the beauty of Escarpment country. To work to preserve that beauty and to allow public access to it has been worth all the blood, sweat and tears of more than a quarter century of involvement.

Ross McLean



Norman Jolicoeur of Quebec at BPNP Visitor Centre *



“The PBTC display was set up on the porch of the Visitor centre at Bruce Peninsula National Park every Saturday from July 7th to September 1st. “

* His blog at: http://www.blogue.canoe.com/2007/08/13/le_cancer_en_vacance_a_la_pourvoirie_du__1 is worth a visit”

Join us for the official opening of the South West Coast Path Friendship Trail



MapleCross Nature Reserve at Cape Chin
September 26, 2024 at 10 am



International Friendship Trail Opening

A new international friendship trail is set to open on September 26 at Cape Chin, offering hikers a stunning array of landscapes and views. The loop trail, which partners with the Southwest Coast Path in the UK, will wind through restored meadows, wetlands, and diverse forests,

culminating in spectacular vistas from Cape Chin and other escarpment lookouts.

The Bruce Trail Conservancy, a founding member of the World Trails Network, fosters these international partnerships through Friendship Trails. This initiative connects trails globally, raising awareness and support for public footpaths. The Cape Chin trail is the Conservancy's ninth Friendship Trail, marked with special signs signifying the partnership.

PBTC volunteers, Tom Hall and Laura Browne were recently recognized as volunteers of the month for the Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy



LAURA BROWNE HARD AT WORK CREATING BEAUTIFUL TRAILS FOR THE PUBLIC TO USE!

Laura and Tom's Trailblazing Contributions

Editors Note: We are fortunate to have many generous, talented, and hard working volunteers who contribute to the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club. Recently, two of our most dedicated volunteers, Tom Hall and Laura Browne, were recognized by the Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy for their skill as trailblazers. The following article is reprinted from the EBC's newsletter.

Spotlight on Volunteers: Laura and Tom's Trailblazing Contributions

This month, we're thrilled to spotlight Laura Browne and Tom Hall, a dynamic duo whose dedication to trail maintenance and conservation has tremendously benefited our community.

Trailblazers: Discovering the Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy

As residents of the Saugeen Bruce Peninsula, Laura and Tom first became aware of our organization through signs posted on various properties along the Peninsula. Inspired by their love for hiking trails, such as Heaven's Gate Trail and parts of the Bruce Trail that cross our land, they reached out to Beth Gilhespy, seeking a "work-cation" opportunity this summer. This led to a connection with Roy Jeffery, the Manitoulin Island/Manidoo Minising Land Steward Coordinator, who was eager to deploy their trail-building expertise.

Commitment to Conservation

The decision to volunteer was an easy one for Laura and Tom, particularly when they learned of a new trail proposal at Lake Wolsey Nature Preserve. They eagerly offered their skills, excited about the opportunity to create a new trail, and brought both enthusiasm and extensive experience to the project.

Making a Mark: Their Impact

Over a dedicated week at Lake Wolsey, Laura and Tom collectively contributed 76 hours of hard labour. With the help of Roy and another volunteer, Veronika Bingaman, they blazed a trail along the escarpment cliff edge and created a treadway that now forms a 6 km loop when connected with an existing trail. Their work included heavy lifting of chainsaws, loppers, and fuel, tackling the rugged terrain to enhance accessibility and safety for future hikers.

Remarkably, the trail system they've helped shape at Lake Wolsey now resembles the distinctive head of a Sandhill Crane, complete with a rounded head and a long bill. This unique feature adds an extra layer of intrigue and beauty to the trail, matching the creativity and dedication of Laura and Tom's contributions. The trail has amazing lookouts over Lake Wolsey from the top of the cliffs and enchanting moss and fern-laden rock walls and caves to be explored underneath the escarpment.

From Careers to Chainsaws

Both retired professionals, Laura and Tom have blended their backgrounds - Laura's in secondary education and Tom's in nursing - into a formidable team dedicated to trail design and



**EBC'S VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH, TOM HALL,
AT WOLSEY LAKE NATURE PRESERVE.**

maintenance that allows people to explore nature. Their journey together began in 2008 and included becoming certified chainsaw operators in 2016. They have applied their trail creation skills with precision and care, significantly enhancing the safety and accessibility of several notable trails while taking care to preserve the natural features that make the Niagara Escarpment so beautiful.

The Future of the Lake Wolsey Trail System

While the new trail system at Lake Wolsey is nearing completion, Laura and Tom note that there's still work to be done, including fine-tuning the trail's far end, updating signs, blazing the trail, and refreshing the maps. Their vision is for this trail to offer a real adventure, highlighting the rugged and natural beauty of the area.



YOUNG VOLUNTEERS HARD AT WORK

Young Volunteers Plant 400 Trees

BY LES MCBETH
PBTC COMMUNICATIONS
DIRECTOR

The Peninsula Bruce Trail Club recently hosted a successful tree-planting event at its Vanishing Stream property near Colpoy’s Bay. Over 60 volunteers, Bruce Peninsula Sportsmen’s Association (youth members), Scouts Canada Wiarton, the BTC Youth Council, Saugeen Academy and members of the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club planted over 450 trees.

The Vanishing Stream property is a unique 100-acre site that has been heavily grazed for over a century. It encompasses a meadow, wetlands, and forested areas with a hidden stream flowing beneath the limestone rocks. The property has undergone significant restoration efforts in recent years, including the planting of native trees, the removal of invasive Scotch pines, and the controlled burning of the degraded meadow.

The tree-planting event was part of the club’s multi-year restoration project aimed at increasing biodiversity and enhancing the Bruce Trail’s wildlife

corridor. The newly planted trees and shrubs will provide sustenance and shelter for various bird, animal, and pollinator species.

Some of the trees were generously donated by Tom Gehrels, a local travel agent with Adventure Coordinators. These trees will contribute to addressing climate change by storing carbon primarily in their roots. Carbon sequestration will increase annually as the trees mature.

The Peninsula Bruce Trail Club extends its gratitude to all the volunteers, including youth and young adults, who dedicated their time and energy to making the tree-planting event a success. The club encourages continued participation in future restoration projects to preserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Vanishing Stream property and the surrounding area.



PLANTING NATIVE SPECIES TO ATTRACT POLLINATORS AND WILDLIFE

