



THE RATTLER

The newsletter of the



Bruce Trail
CONSERVANCY

PENINSULA CLUB

2025 #3

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Julie Bennett

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hi everyone, hope you are still getting outside to enjoy some hiking and sunny days.

Congratulations to the Hope Bay Stairway crew and PBTC Hike Director, who were recently recognized at the BTC AGM for their outstanding contributions!

The Hope Bay Stairway won the “Philip & Jean Gosling” award. This award is presented annually to the Bruce Trail Club completing the year’s most significant trail project which improves or protects the environment. The Team consists of Doug Hill, Lloyd Hayward, Owen Glendon, Tim Wilson, and Tom Hall

PBTC Hike Director Saabir Sohrab was presented with the new BTC “Leaders in Hiking” award for his exceptional leadership.



LLOYD HAYWARD, OWEN GLENDON, DOUG HILL, TIM WILSON, AND TOM HALL ACCEPT THE PHILIP & JEAN GOSLING AWARD.

The PBTC Board of Directors is filled with people with incredible skills, who are dedicated to the protection, safety, and enjoyment of the Peninsula trails. I can’t thank the Board enough for their outstanding support. While many of us think the season is over, the PBTC Board of Directors has been busy planning for 2026.

The Vice President, PBTC Representative to the BTC Board and I are planning a Strategic Planning session where we will align PBTC activities more closely with the Five Strategic Goals of the BTC:

- Urgently protect land
- Restore and care for Niagara Escarpment land
- Enhance the Bruce Trail experience
- Inspire generosity
- Support people and culture

I am also working on a Pilot project to make the PBTC AGM shorter, leaving us more time



HIKE DIRECTOR SAABIR SOHRAB ACCEPTS THE LEADERS IN HIKING AWARD FROM RHIANNON CARRUTHERS

Julie Bennett

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

for Club Awards and to socialize! We will be sending out the AGM Package by email about a week before the meeting. You will have the opportunity to read the Minutes from the Previous AGM, Reports from the PBTC Directors, Financial Statements, and the Slate of the PBTC Directors in advance. We will have the opportunity to cast your vote to approve the Minutes, Financial Statements, and Slate of the PBTC Board in advance.

The Secretary continues to keep the Board organized and on track while being on several PBTC and Sydenham Club committees. I don't know what I would do without her remarkable ability to juggle Board Agendas, Minutes, and Action Items.

Our Treasurer expertly led the Board through a Budget Planning session for 2026, where we ambitiously assigned funding towards projects and activities that will help us achieve our objectives.

The Hike Director and Team just met to plan many activities for the winter including a Pilot program where the Hike leaders are trialling a Winter Peninsula End To End. We are asking that people hiking with us bring a food donation so we can support the local community food banks. The 2026 hike schedule is being developed and our dedicated team is planning a very full range of hikes from beginner, specialty including geology, migration, birding, running series, and several Peninsula End to Ends.

The Peninsula Trails have just completed the 5-year trail audit. Many thanks to the Trail

Maintenance Coordinator, the North & South Crew with the help of the Trail Captains, Sawyers, builders, and volunteers for the thousands of hours spent helping to keep our trails in such great shape.

Outreach has planned several winter activities so come join us in the local parades celebrating our beautiful trails! We have been invited to speak about PBTC to many local service groups and are participating in several environmental initiatives here on the Peninsula. Lots of activities are in the planning stages for 2026 including re-introducing the Trail Angel Program.

Our Membership Director is engaged with many local and national organizations facilitating member discounts and PBTC merchandise. We are always looking for new members to join our amazing PBTC family.

The Trail Development Director has been working with Saugeen Ojibway Nation Environmental Office and the Bruce Peninsula National Park on a re-route for Crane Lake Road and with several Landowners donating properties to the BTC. We are excited for the potential of some new main and side trails in our quest to get closer to the optimum route.

Biodiversity continues to be a critical element of our Club. We recognize that the activities PBTC participates in through our Conservation and Land Stewardship teams make significant contributions to essential ecosystem services like clean air and water, supporting food security, and creating robust, stable ecosystems that regulate climate and

Julie Bennett

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

disease. We have a plethora of initiatives planned for 2026.

The Communications Director continues to coordinate the Rattler, be our webmaster, and assist PBTC board members transition to new role-based emails. These new peninsula.brucetrail.org emails are standardized email addresses that are associated with the BTC domain. We are the first of all nine clubs to be rolled out. As always, we encourage you to read The Rattler, our social media posts, and websites for updates on PBTC activities.

The Archives Director is constantly researching the history of both the Club and properties along the trail. She has written a very interesting article on the history of the Cape Chin House in this edition of the Rattler.

Our At Large Directors are working very closely with PBTC Board members to assist in Landowner Relations, Badge distribution and conservation activities, and contribute to the education of Traditional Knowledge practices of PBTC.

Finally, where would we be without the support of our Members, Volunteers, Donors, and Landowners? PBTC could not do all of these things without you. We are planning celebrations of YOU in 2026. Thank you for being part of the PBTC family.

Happy Hiking and I can't wait to see you on the trails in 2026!

Julie



BOARD MEMBERS YVETTE ROBERTS AND OWEN GLENDON AT THE SANTA CLAUS PARADE



TRAIL MAINTENANCE DIRECTOR TOM HALL

THE RATTLER



Bruce Trail
CONSERVANCY
PENINSULA CLUB

2025 ISSUE 3

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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 March 7, 2026

Editors: Leslie McBeth, Larisa Nagelberg, Daksh Patel

Layout: Leslie McBeth

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SAUGEEN (BRUCE) PENINSULA LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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.

PBTC by the Numbers

A snapshot of the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club's impactful year. Quantifying the immense effort dedicated to organizing hikes, maintaining trails, and engaging in conservation and community outreach, all made possible by dedicated volunteers.

On the Trail: Hiking & Maintenance



**1,294 km
Hiked** →

Covered across 121 organized hikes led by 25 dedicated hike leaders.



**3,247
Volunteer Hours**

Invested by trail captains and volunteers to maintain 138 trail sections.



**554
Trees Cleared**

A major effort following a significant ice storm, ensuring trails remained safe.

In the Community: Conservation & Outreach



**63 Land
Stewards**

Actively monitoring and protecting the club's managed conservation lands.



**400+
Trees Planted**

With the help of approximately 100 volunteers during conservation events.



**30+ Outreach
Initiatives**

Including 20 speaking engagements and 10 organized litter clean-up events.





BRUCE TRAIL DAY HIKERS IN NEYAASHIINIGMIING

Bruce Trail Day – Connections on the Trail

KATHLEEN STAHLBAUM
CO-COORDINATOR, PBTC
BRUCE TRAIL DAY 2025

Bruce Trail Day is an annual celebration held on the first Sunday of October. Each Bruce Trail Club offers free guided hikes and welcomes the public to join in activities organized by individual Clubs. The day provides an opportunity to learn more about our year-round hiking programs, trail maintenance, land stewardship, and volunteer opportunities with the Bruce Trail Clubs.

This year's theme, Connections on the Trail, highlighted the many ways we connect with nature and one another - from the people we meet along the way to the wildlife and scenery we encounter, and to the Indigenous communities who have cared for these lands since time immemorial and continue to do so today.

The Peninsula Bruce Trail Club (PBTC) once again partnered with Cape Croker Park and the Anishinaabe Cultural Experiences program to offer free guided hikes, a light lunch, and a community gathering at the Cape Croker Park Pavilion.

After last year's stormy weather led to a smaller turnout, this year's Bruce Trail Day was blessed with a warm, sunny autumn day - perfect for exploring the trails!

Participants had the option to join one of four guided hikes and later gathered at the Pavilion to enjoy sconedogs prepared by Darrell from Nishoomi's Bison Kitchen in Neyaashiinigmiing (formerly known as Cape Croker).

Parks Canada was on-site with their ever-popular button maker and Fisher friend, while BTC Staff Ecologist Brian Popelier answered questions about land stewardship and the Bruce Trail Conservancy's nature reserves on the Saugeen (Bruce) Peninsula.

We began the morning with two hikes. The Big Bruce Loop lead by Nathan Monk and Marg Glode explored the strenuous yet spectacular Boundary Bluffs Side Trail up Sydney Bay Bluffs and the Harts Tongue Side Trail through the rich woods along the top of the Bluff. The Mindfulness and Meditation Walk near McIver Pond was a relaxing and restorative walk lead by Shawn Radcliffe and Beige McIntosh. This silent and phone-free hike encouraged hikers to engage their senses to notice the natural world around them.



**BTC ECOLOGIST BRIAN POPELIER AND
PBTC PRESIDENT JULIE BENNETT**



[Transportation for hikers in the Peninsula](#)



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Following lunch, Caley Doran and Tainin Hopkinson led hikes on two separate Cape Croker trails. Caley's group explored the Ginebek Miikaans Trail - a section of the Bruce Trail that winds along the shoreline of Wiikwedoonse (Sydney Bay) within the unceded Anishinaabek territory of Neyaashiinigmiing. Along the way, hikers enjoyed scenic lookouts, observed a beaver pond, learned about how the Anishinaabek people use plants for food, medicine, in ceremonies and daily living, and listened to stories about the Anishinaabe relationship with Earth.

Tainin led a group along Waazh Mikaans, a short but strenuous trail that winds up, over, under, and through the rockfall caves beneath Sydney Bay Bluff. Along the way, hikers learned about the unique geology and ecology of the area.

PBTC extends heartfelt thanks to our wonderful neighbours at Cape Croker Park in Neyaashiinigmiing for their support, guidance, and hospitality on this special day. Chi-Miigwetch to Cape Croker's Anishinaabe Cultural Experiences program, which connects visitors with the land, water, language, and traditions of the Anishinaabek through guided storytelling, hands-on learning, and nature-based activities led by knowledgeable Indigenous guides.

We would also like to extend our gratitude to the Bruce Trail Conservancy and the Greenbelt Foundation for their support, especially for providing bus transportation, which helped make the event more accessible for participants traveling from out of town. Last but not least, thanks to our volunteer and hike leader team for their support leading up to and during Bruce Trail Day!



CALEY DORAN LEADS A HIKE AT GINEBEK MIIKAANS TRAIL



If you are interested in volunteering with PBTC, please contact Yvette Roberts at outreachforpbtc@gmail.com.

To learn more about membership, reach out to Lynda James at membership@peninsula.brucetrail.org.

For information about our upcoming events and hikes check out our website at www.peninsula.brucetrail.org.



Over 100 hikers and volunteers came together to celebrate the diverse ecology of the Saugeen (Bruce) Peninsula

2025 Peninsula Hiking Festival – Diversity in Nature!

BY LES MCBETH
2025 PENINSULA HIKING
FESTIVAL CO-CHAIR

The PBTC proudly hosted the 2025 Peninsula Hiking Festival on September 19th and 20th, returning to the scenic grounds of Camp Celtic in Lion’s Head. Centered around the theme of Diversity in Nature, this year’s event drew hikers and conservationists from across the province to celebrate the ecological richness and varied landscapes of the Saugeen (Bruce) Peninsula.



PHOTO BY MARSHA COURTNEY

Building on the success of previous years, the 2025 program offered a wide spectrum of experiences, from tranquil coastal strolls to demanding backcountry treks. Participants explored “Nature’s Tapestry” in a hike at Malcolm Bluff, where they enjoyed tea at a historic hand-built cabin, and ventured into the “Loop of Life” around the three lakes of Bruce Peninsula National Park. For those seeking a physical challenge, the festival introduced longer routes, including a rigorous 17km exploration of the ridges and gullies of Lion’s Head Provincial Park.

Interpretive programs remained a cornerstone of the weekend. Experts led sessions on invasive species awareness at Singing Sands, "Queer Ecology" at Jones Bluff, and the fascinating history of the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club itself. Creative spirits took to the trails for photography workshops designed to capture the "Endless Frames" of the Escarpment, while early risers were treated to a magical "Dawn on the Rocks" sunrise hike at Halfway Log Dump.

A special thank you goes to the dedicated subject-matter experts and hike leaders who shared their passion and knowledge: Beth Gilhespy, Rhiannon Carruthers, Bob Knapp, Brian Popelier, Liz Stanton, Brenda Stewart, Tainin Hopkinson, Caley Doran, Spencer Bennett, Kathleen Stahlbaum, Shawn Radcliffe, Natalie Mechalko, Julie Bennett, Jeannine Kralt, Bill Floyd, Beige McIntosh and Madie Barker.

The festival's social atmosphere was equally vibrant. Friday night kicked off with live music and delicious oven-fired pizza paired with local brews from Tagwerk Brewing. Between excursions, participants gathered at Camp Celtic to share stories and enjoy the camaraderie that has become a hallmark of this event. The weekend concluded with a communal dinner, allowing hikers to reflect on their

journeys through the peninsula's diverse forests, rocky outcrops, and turquoise shorelines. During the dinner, hikers were enthralled with a fascinating presentation on Indigenous Archaeology by Caley Doran.

The success of the 2025 Festival was bolstered by the incredible generosity of our local sponsors and businesses. Their support ensured that the event remained accessible while raising vital funds to support PBTC's ongoing trail maintenance and conservation efforts.

The Peninsula Bruce Trail Club, one of nine clubs within the Bruce Trail Conservancy, remains committed to stewarding over 260 km of the main trail and dozens of nature reserves. This mission is made possible by our volunteers—the heart of the festival—who spent months planning every detail to ensure a welcoming and inclusive experience for all.

Congratulations to the Peninsula Hiking Festival Committee and the entire PBTC community for another unforgettable year. If you are inspired to help shape the 2026 Festival, we invite you to reach out and join our volunteer team! To learn more about volunteering, contact Leslie at pbtc.hikes@gmail.com.



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PHOTO BY DOROTA RAJEWSKA





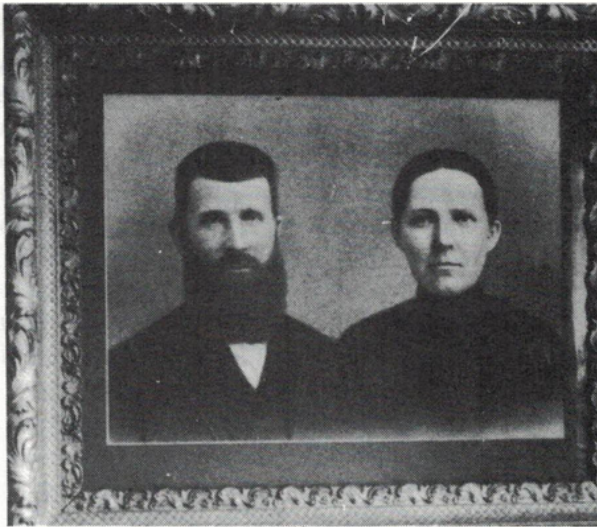
THE “FOX” HOUSE AT CAPE CHIN

The “Fox” House at Maplecross Nature Reserve at Cape Chin

BY BRENDA STEWART
PBTC ARCHIVIST

This architecturally unique house stands uninhabited on the point at Cape Chin, being battered by the elements, deteriorating structurally and soon to be demolished. Over the years since the Bruce Trail was rerouted here in 2020, hundreds of hikers have passed by its doors and sat on the terrace for lunch while they take in the spectacular scenery of the Cape Chin lookout and Georgian Bay.

In August of this year, I met with the local stonemasons who worked on this incredible house to hear their stories of how it came to be built. I was introduced to them by Brandee Ceaser-MacDonald, a PBTC member and a relative of these men. On a beautiful summer morning I sat down with Brandee, Elmer Ceaser (her grandfather), Don Ceaser (her father), and Lorne Ceaser (her great-uncle). Another great-uncle, Ron Ceaser, who also worked on the house, was not there. All are descendants of one of the area’s earliest local settler families, John and Ellen Ceaser. A framed picture of this pioneer couple proudly hangs in the living room where we sat.



Settlers John and Ellen Ceaser

The Ceaser's arrived in Lindsay Township in 1867. Elmer told me the story of how John Ceaser arrived first, built a cabin along the shoreline, then went over to Southampton to pick up the rest of his family. When he returned the cabin was completely looted and nearly destroyed. They later built a log house on their lot to the north of what is now the Maplecross Nature Reserve at Cape Chin (MNRCC). Elmer was born and raised in this house and had many stories to tell of growing up there.

The lots that now comprise the MCNRCC were never settled. They have historically consisted of forest and open meadow land and later pasture. They are now subject to a restoration project by the BTC. A grassland meadow is being created, and many native trees and shrubs have been planted. The part of the property next to the shoreline was originally owned by Capt. John H. Spence. He and his brothers were prominent in the history of Southampton. They engaged in a coastal trading and lumber business in the 1880s and 1890s. They also kept general stores in Pike Bay, Dyer's Bay and

Tobermory. They sold their lots to Alexander Weatherhead, another local settler, in 1906, but probably took the lumber off the land first.

Alexander Weatherhead and Robert Watt originally owned the rest of the lots on the property, but they never built there. Robert Watt is known for erecting the first sawmill in Lion's Head. He later also built a grist mill there. Alexander Weatherhead had a farm nearby and raised his family and probably used the pasture on the property.

The land changed hands a few times after that, and around 1970 it was sold to Richard and Eunice Fox. Richard Fox owned a manufacturing company in Chesterfield, Michigan. His company made parts for tractors, combines, etc. and supplied Massey-Ferguson and several other companies.

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According to Elmer Ceaser, Mr. Fox was a very private individual, and “he was one of the finest people you would ever meet.” He enjoyed hunting, fishing, and the outdoors, which is what probably drew him to the Bruce Peninsula area. At that time in the 1970’s there were several other Michigan landowners in the area, especially around Dyers Bay.

The house was designed by an architect from Michigan. “There couldn’t be a square corner in it, except for inside one closet”, as Elmer pointed out. Every corner was either 60 or 120 degrees. “There were 34 bends in the house, and over 100 if you include the foundation and decks.” Elmer told me there was originally a plasticine model of the house which the Fox family purchased for ~\$10,000. It was in the house when they were building it.

Construction started around 1970 or ‘71, and the house took 4 years to build. The Ceaser brothers, Elmer, Lorne, and Ron, are local stonemasons, skilled in the art of creating buildings from the stone found along the Georgian Bay shoreline. They had previously completed several cottages and homes in the area and were at the time working near Bradley Harbor. They were contracted by the Foxes to build this unique new house.

The stone to build the exterior of the house came from Shingle Beach on Dyer’s Bay, just north of where the flume was that carried logs from Gillies Lake to the shoreline mill in the days of the lumber trade. Don and Elmer described how the stones selected had to have a straight side on them, or an angle at the end. They could be anywhere from four inches to 2.5 feet. The stone was all natural, not cut. As Elmer said, “You never touch them with a chisel, you just use it, and fit it”. The interior stone was sourced from local Wiarton quarries. He describes how there’s more stonework on the inside than there is on the outside.

There are two monstrous stone columns running up the interior of the house that can be seen from the outside as the two chimney stacks, one housing the school bell. The northernmost column is 35 ft. high and 17 ft. one way, housing 3 fireplaces and is solid stone. Elmer remembers it took around 350 bags of cement to construct and mortar all the stones. In this chimney, there is a fireplace in the ground level room, one in the main floor living room, and one in the master bedroom.

THE LIVING ROOM FIREPLACE AND VIEW



He also told me they called the glass-walled corner in the master bedroom that runs way out, the “10 million dollar point”.

The southerly chimney column was built for the big gas grill area in the main floor kitchen. Above this area of the kitchen was a small “children’s sleeping nook” accessible only by stone ladder steps set into the wall on the opposite side. This small room had 27 corners on it and as Don said, “it was crazy to work on that thing!”

Don also described how the third floor had issues with the plasticine model, “it was easy to build and twist with plasticine, but you couldn’t do that with wood, so the architect had to come up and do a redesign...They just couldn’t figure it out on the blueprint.”

The entire roof was originally cedar shake shingles. The men talked about putting the wood shakes on the roof in 10 below zero weather with the cold wind blowing in



THE MASTER BEDROOM VIEW



THE GAS RANGE



THE SLEEPING NOOK



THE PLANT "WELL"

off Georgian Bay. They also talked about putting up the school bell that hangs in the southern chimney column. However, they weren't sure exactly where it was sourced from.

The interior photos of the house show a staircase directly opposite the front door, in the center of the house. It winds upwards with landings around an opening which goes from the ground floor level all the way to the peak of the roof. In the ground floor level at the bottom of these

stairs, there is a stone enclosed "well" with spotlights on it. Elmer and Lorne said that this was built specifically for a giant rubber plant tree that the Foxes wished to put there.

Each of the 3 levels of the house has a full bathroom, the main floor master bedroom bath has an adjoining small sauna with a window looking out to the garage area, where there is also a hot tub. Despite the interior of the house having walls built mainly of stone, the

bathrooms definitely reflect the creativity of the 1970's in their décor! Geometrically patterned wallpaper complements olive coloured bathroom fixtures.

The ground level and main floor both have kitchens with cooking areas. There is in total only 4 bedrooms, one on the ground and main floors, and 2 on the upper level, plus the little children's sleeping nook over the kitchen. All the rooms circle around the central staircase and the two large stone chimney columns. It truly is a house of corners!

The exterior landscape was no less daunting an environment to build in. The house is perched on the escarpment over a hundred feet above the waters of Georgian Bay. The men had to construct a staircase down this stone face to access the bay and get water pumped up to the house. The original staircase that has since been removed was cut in the rock in a cleft in the stone to the north of the big outcropping and ledge. Elmer describes the process of building the stairs, "I had to kind of crawl down for 10 feet, hang on the rock, build the first section, then you



THE COLOURFUL BATHROOM



ANOTHER COLOURFUL BATHROOM



THE MAIN STAIRCASE



THE INTERIOR

go down on those steps". He recalls there were about 144 step sets. Down there was a pump house built to pump up the water from the bay, with insulated pipes for the winter. There was another pump house up top with a large reservoir tank built near the circular drive. This reservoir was constantly filling with water from the Bay and had an overflow into a little stone fishpond which Elmer also built. It is a lovely little spot hidden in the woods near the driveway. There are benches and a stone flagstone patio around the small

pond, filled with stagnant water, now home to frogs and tadpoles.

When the house was finished construction in 1974, the Foxes started using it for a vacation home. The Fox family has 5 children, 4 girls and a boy. They would drive up from Michigan several times a year and stay for days or weeks, even in the winter. Don Ceaser, pastured his cattle on the property, and was caretaker when they were absent. He describes some of the issues that led to the Bruce Trail



THE ICONIC LEDGE, DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF THE FOX HOUSE

access on their property being revoked by the family in the late seventies. When the Foxes bought the property, the Bruce Trail ran along the edge of the escarpment, much the same location as it is now. In Ross McLean’s book, “PBTC, 30 Years to Remember” he talks about the loss of trail access at Cape Chin north, “I have never heard a full explanation of this loss, but stories have included a break-in at the cottage (could it really have been a backpacker who stole that television?), a trampling of reforested trees by hikers, and landowner opposition to proposed NEC regulations.” Don also described the issues the Fox family had with hikers around that time. He said the Foxes told him of instances of hikers camping on the front lawn when they were there or peering in windows. The water pipe down the escarpment was cut by unknown persons 3 times and had to be replaced. Whatever the ultimate reasons, Mr. Fox withdrew permission for the Bruce Trail to cross his land, and an extensive reroute on roads was necessitated in the late 1970’s.

Richard Fox died in 2010 at the age of 81. His wife, Eunice, died 4 years later, in 2014. After that time, the house was not used very much by the family and was eventually put up for sale. In 2020, the BTC announced the purchase of this 523 acre property, and the Bruce Trail was finally able to return to the escarpment, after a hiatus of nearly 42 years!

The house was unable to be repurposed by the BTC and will be taken down in the spring of next year. Elements from the home are being repurposed and also preserved in archives. For example, the door knocker from the house has become the PBTC President’s Fox Waagosh Award.

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PBTC Volunteers Honored in Owen Sound

BY LES MCBETH
COMMUNICATIONS
DIRECTOR

The spirit of community and dedication was on full display at the Best Western in Owen Sound in October, as the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism hosted the Ontario Volunteer Service Award ceremony. This event served as a reminder of the power of volunteerism, recognizing an incredible 1,950 combined years of service among the evening’s honorees.

The Peninsula Bruce Trail Club (PBTC) was well-represented, with several of our most dedicated members receiving formal recognition for their long-standing commitment to the trail and the Bruce Trail Conservancy mission.

We are proud to congratulate the following volunteers for their extraordinary milestones:

- LAURENCE ACLAND - 25 YEARS OF SERVICE
- TIM HAMMOND - 20 YEARS OF SERVICE
- JACKIE HAMMOND - 20 YEARS OF SERVICE
- TOM GEHRELS - 20 YEARS OF SERVICE
- JOHN WHITWORTH - 15 YEARS OF SERVICE
- DARCI LOMBARD - 15 YEARS OF SERVICE

Their decades of work—ranging from trail maintenance and stewardship to leadership and outreach—ensure that the beauty of the Niagara Escarpment remains protected and accessible for generations to come. Special thank you to the submission committee—Tom Hall, Laura Pisko, Marg Glendon, and Tamara Wilson.

“Once upon a time, words began to vanish from the language of children”
 – Robert McFarlane.



THE LOST WORDS

Reading Now

BY MARG GLENDON
 PBTC VOLUNTEER

Author Robert McFarlane and Illustrator Jackie Morris use the magic of words and images to cast a “spell” in these two wonderful books: [The Lost Words](#) and [The Lost Spells](#).

Their books of poetry and art connect the reader to nature and the language to describe it. They are meant to be read aloud as the words conjure up images of

the “wild” and validate their existence. It’s also so much fun to articulate the words and share that experience with someone.

Recent studies reveal a 60% decrease in the use of nature-related words, since the era of industrialization. Additional studies, show this decline is reflected in our current interactions with the natural world.

In 2007, the Oxford Junior Dictionary removed words such as acorn, blackberry, moss, and minnow, replacing with blog, cut-and-paste, and chatroom. Environment Journalist, Kate Yoder, says this reflects what is important in our current culture. Culture and nature are intertwined. Research suggests that how we comprehend, view and describe nature relates to our behaviour toward our environment and desire to protect nature.

The Lost Spells and the Lost Words books of poetry and art will re-wild your imagination and inspire you, your children and grandchildren to connect with nature.

Thank you to Tobermory Librarian, Kathryn Hauck for her recommendation! Look for both books at your local library.

“It is told in gold – the gold of goldfinches that flit through its pages in charms – and it holds not poems but spells of many kinds that might just, by the old, strong magic of being spoken aloud, unfold dreams and songs, and summon lost words back into the mouth and the mind’s eye”

– Robert McFarlane.

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HIKERS WHO COMPLETED THE PENINSULA SECTION IN 8 STRAIGHT DAYS WITH HIKE LEADER RUTH MOFFATT

Reflections on an End-to-End in 8

BY CATHY SCOTT-MAY
HIKER

I have shared stories of our adventure with friends and family, including my 8 mornings of hiking the Peninsula section of the Bruce Trail, from the perspective of my body. In case you might enjoy a few laughs.....

Morning #1. Excitement: We're going on an adventure? Great, where are we going?

Morning #2. Resist: I am not getting out of bed and you can't make me. Well, OK you can but I am going to make sure that you know that I am very unhappy about this.

Morning #3. Negotiation: Again, really? OK, I will do this today if you promise that this is the last day. Hello? I am waiting for the promise.

Morning #4: Dumbfounded realization: So, after today we are halfway. To where? The hospital? Hell?

Morning #5: Guarded acceptance: Ok, it is getting a teeny, tiny bit easier, but I still don't forgive you for those first few days. And did you feel how cozy it was to stay in bed for a few extra minutes?

Morning #6: Bravado: A day off? Not on my account cause I am doing just fine, but hey if you need it. If I must sit today, then let's pull that stool over so the legs can get raised. Ya, that's good.

Morning #7: Cautious optimism: Given all the taping that is getting done on feet, are they going to get stuffed into ballet slippers? Nope, just getting ready for the big day? Ok, then let's go because I am rested and (sort of) ready.

Morning #8: Bittersweet: Last day. Well, let's do this with grace and style. Hold on, not so fast. While this is only a half-day hike, we still need to start with ibuprofen. Ok, let's go walk our goodbye to the Bruce.



VOLUNTEERS PAINTING BLAZES

2025 Peninsula Trail Audit

BY TOM HALL
PBTC TRAIL MAINTENANCE
COORDINATOR

PBTC Trail Captains were very busy this past summer and early fall, reblazing and trimming the trail in preparation for the trail audit.

The BTC Risk Committee conducts a trail audit of each Club over a five-year span to ensure a consistent approach along the whole trail and to ensure the standard for trail maintenance is adhered to. This standard is set out in the document “Basic Trail Maintenance Guide for Trail Captains and Trail Workers”, available on the BTC website.

The auditors are looking for things such as inadequate or misleading blazing, unstable structures or structures with missing ID numbers, trees of concern, or any other hazard. Problems are identified by location and level of risk. This information is reported in the final audit report so that issues can be followed up by the Club.

Problems are categorized as “A, B, or C”. An “A” type problem is considered as something most at risk and it is expected to be rectified within two days. An example would be a broken limb hanging dangerously over the trail. A “B” problem is more routine, such as a missing blaze, and can be fixed as part of normal trail maintenance activity. Issues identified as “A/B” and are expected to be dealt with within two weeks of receiving the audit. “C” issues are minor in nature, perhaps the wrong shade of paint was used, and recorded just for information.

The Club's efforts paid off. Though only the Main Trail Audit results have been received at this point, no major deficiencies were identified. The audit contained no "A" or "A/B" issues. The most frequent observations were the lack of diamonds at trail junctions and the lack of road name signs. Trail Captains are already addressing these issues.

PBTC Trail Captains and Trail Maintenance volunteers have done a fantastic job keeping the Peninsula Club's trail in great shape. This has been recognized by the auditors who remarked, "Peninsula Club trails are in astoundingly well condition considering the sheer devastation of the spring ice storm."

"I REALLY noticed how amazingly good the main trail is now considering the ice storm carnage in spring. The amount of work accomplished by the club in clearing the trails then reblazing after all the damage, WOW."

Many positive comments have also been received from hikers.

"The trail looks amazing, and I can just imagine how difficult it is to keep it in such good shape. We've been through and up the amazing staircase a number of times. Every time, I am amazed and thankful about that beautiful piece of engineering."

"The Bruce Trail is a big part of our life and you are all making this possible. Thank you!"

"Thanks to your entire club for all the great work you do."

"We'd like to thank all the many volunteers who made our trip possible. The trail maintenance and infrastructure (stairs, bridges, etc.) are very impressive and of course make the trail possible.



VOLUNTEERS HANG UP DIAMOND SIGNS

The knowledge that hikers recognize and appreciate all the work that PBTC volunteers put into maintaining the trail for all to use in a safe and enjoyable manner makes it all worthwhile.



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*The annual fundraiser
sold out in hours once
again!*

Bird Ornament Fundraiser

BY LES MCBETH
PBTC COMMUNICATIONS
DIRECTOR

Early in the morning on December 1st, I was on vacation with family in Mexico and set my alarm to wake with the sun. Not because I was hitting the beach, but to login to my computer and click the “go live” button on the PBTC’s e-commerce site for the annual bird ornament fundraiser.



The annual fundraiser, driven by volunteers Pat Turner and Marg Glendon, with the support of Susan Miller from Passionate Glass in Owen Sound and a group of dedicated volunteers, has become a tradition that not only celebrates the birds on the Saugeen Peninsula, but also raises important funding to protect them.

This year’s beautiful handcrafted glass ornament celebrated the American Goldfinch, known as the Aginjibagwesi in Anishinaabemowin.

The name Aginjibagwesi comes from:

- “Aginji” from aginjigaade, meaning “it is counted”
- “Bag” (or buk) meaning “leaf”

This name roughly translates to “the one who counts the leaves” and is given to this bird because when it sings, it is said to be counting the leaves of the trees. The goldfinch is considered a spirit keeper of the language and a symbol of joy and renewal.

Over the course of several weeks this fall, volunteers cut and fused the glass ornaments, creating 100 to be sold in the fundraiser. Selling at \$30 each, the program raised \$3,000 for the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club.

The proceeds from ornament sales will help preserve local bird habitat and protect rare bird species along the Peninsula section of the Bruce Trail, through land stewardship and education, such as the Junior Birder Badge program.

Funds from last year's ornament sale also supported a talk on bird migration at the Bruce Peninsula National Park. The talk, featured Stéphane Menu from Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory, Anna Fletcher from Bruce Peninsula National Park, and Arni Stinnissen's beautiful photos, and was part of the PBTC's efforts to educate the public about the birds of the Peninsula.

So, as I listened to the Great Kiskadees and Melodious Blackbirds welcome the morning in Playa Mujeres, I watched as the number of available American Goldfinch ornaments drop from 100 to only a handful in a matter of minutes. Even with a limit of four per customer, we were sold out in only a few hours.

Thank you to everyone who was lucky enough to purchase ornaments this year!

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Owen Sound Field Naturalists receive Bruce Trail Conservancy's Calypso Orchid Environmental Award for 2025

BY WILLY WATERTON
OWEN SOUND FIELD
NATURALISTS

The Owen Sound Field Naturalists have been awarded the prestigious Bruce Trail Conservancy's Calypso Orchid Environmental Award for 2025 after being nominated by Marg Glendon, a member of the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club and the OSFN.

FROM BTC CEO MICHAEL MCDONALD:

"I am pleased to inform you that the Owen Sound Field Naturalists have been selected as this year's recipients of the Bruce Trail Conservancy's Calypso Orchid Environmental Award.

Each year we present the Calypso Orchid Environmental Award to an individual or organization that has made a significant contribution to the restoration and preservation of the Bruce Trail conservation corridor or significantly enhanced the education of users or potential users of the Trail. The Owen Sound Field Naturalists are a perfect fit.

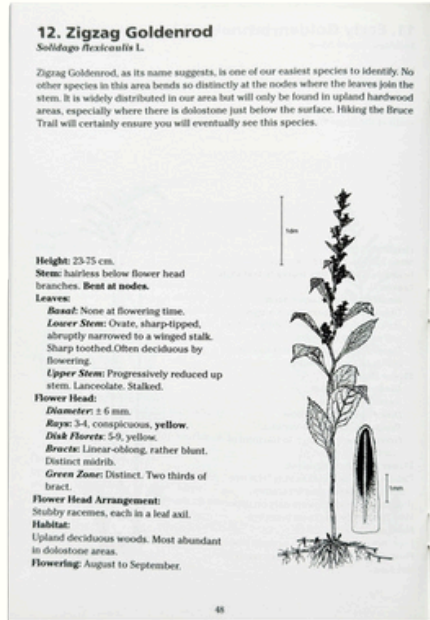
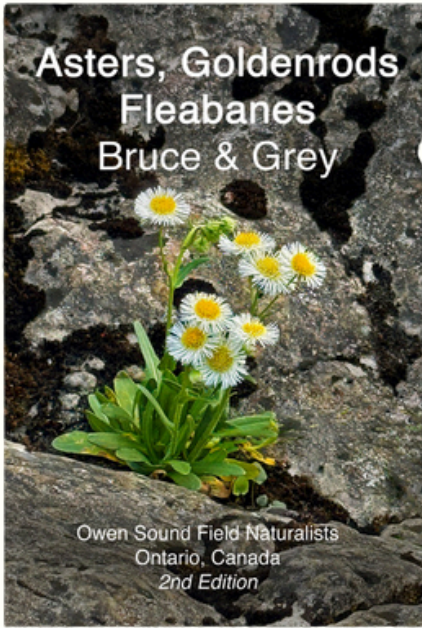


**BARBARA PALMER (OSFN),
BTC CEO MICHAEL MCDONALD AND
AUDREY ARMSTRONG (OSFN)**

The Bruce Trail Conservancy would like to recognize and celebrate OSFN's outstanding dedication to nurturing the appreciation and conservation of our natural world. In particular, OSFN's educational activities, Young Naturalist program, and newly revised guidebooks are stellar examples of how OSFN promotes understanding and inspires action for the protection of nature.

Through the Calypso Orchid Environmental Award 2025, the Bruce Trail Conservancy honours OSFN's tremendous volunteer efforts to increase public awareness on environmental issues affecting the Niagara Escarpment, boost understanding and appreciation of Escarpment biodiversity, and contribute to the preservation of the Bruce Trail's conservation corridor. Congratulations, Owen Sound Field Naturalists!"

Congratulations to OSFN members, past and present, for your contributions that have led to this award!



SAMPLE PAGES FROM THE NEW PUBLICATION

Owen Sound Field Naturalists Publish 2nd Edition of Asters, Goldenrods and Fleabanes Bruce & Grey

**BY AUDREY ARMSTRONG
OWEN SOUND FIELD
NATURALISTS**

First released in 2000, Asters Goldenrods & Fleabanes of Grey and Bruce Counties has been a popular publication of the Owen Sound Field Naturalists. Now this 2nd edition field guide, Asters, Goldenrods, Fleabanes Bruce & Grey includes several new species, varieties, and hybrids with a total of 40 plants featured.

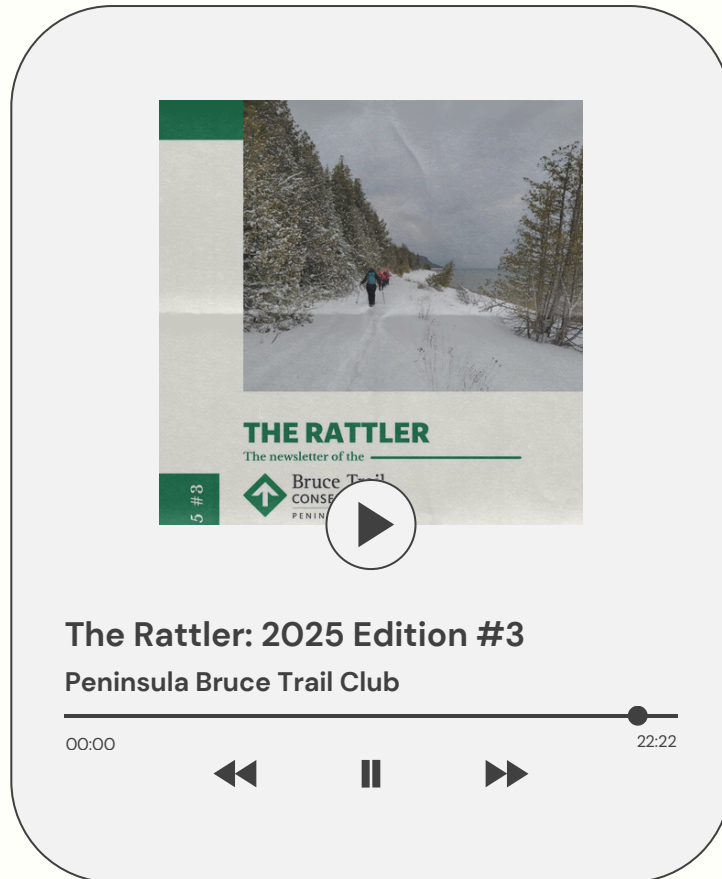
Six Nationally or Provincially rare and endangered species are noted. There are full colour photographs with diagnostic details and an Illustrated Glossary to help amateurs in the field. Anecdotal information and a systematic description of each plant and its habitat, accompanied by illustrations and photographs are included in this 116 page spiral bound soft cover book. A chart of the approximate flowering times for these plants has been added to the 2nd edition. Another new feature is a chart of Provincial Conservation Status and Local Status of Asters, Goldenrods and Fleabanes in Bruce and Grey Counties. An essay on Climate Change and Asters, Goldenrods and Fleabanes in Bruce Grey by Dr. Scott Parker is included.

The full book is available from our online shop, (\$30.00) or as a downloadable PDF (\$15.00) to carry on your phone for easy reference in the field. 2nd Edition available online after December 12th at owensoundfieldnaturalists.ca/shop

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