

INSIDE: PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

VOL. 61, NO.4, FALL 2024

Bruce Trail

C O N S E R V A N C Y

MAGAZINE

A photograph of two children in a forest setting. The child on the left is wearing a pink hijab and a pink long-sleeved shirt, looking through a magnifying glass at a specimen on the ground. The child on the right is wearing a red baseball cap with a Canadian flag logo, a blue hoodie, and green camouflage pants, also looking through a magnifying glass. They are surrounded by fallen leaves and tree trunks in a wooded area.

A Closer Look

Our Mission

Preserving a ribbon
of wilderness, for
everyone, forever.



Bruce Trail
CONSERVANCY

FALL 2024

Photo: Carl Tafel



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Bruce Trail Conservancy Magazine is available digitally.

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- Fill out the request form at brucetrail.org (About Us > Stay Informed > Bruce Trail Conservancy Magazine)
- Call 1-800-665-4453, or
- Email info@brucetrail.org



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Photo: Brian Popellier

Cover photo: Young explorers at The Akela & Scouters Heather & Ross Hamlin Nature Reserve at Riverside Woods, by Sandy Green

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Printed on Anthem Plus Satin
 FSC® Certified paper



The Niagara Escarpment/Gchi-Bimadina/Kastenhkraktátye is the traditional territory of Indigenous peoples. In both spirit and partnership, we recognize and thank the Anishinaabek, Huron-Wendat, Tionontati, Neutral Nation, Haudenosaunee, Métis, and all who provided stewardship of these lands over millennia. Together may we care for this land and each other, drawing upon the strength of our mutual history through peace and friendship, to create a lasting legacy of conservation for generations to come.

The Bruce Trail
 scale in kilometres
 0 50

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Chief Executive Officer's Message



While we are all inspired by the majestic vistas viewed from Old Baldy, Mount Nemo, and Cape Chin, hiking along the Bruce Trail also enables us to see the flora and fauna of the Niagara Escarpment up close and personal.

Explorers of all ages can delight in observing the patterned wings of the many butterflies that drift along our meadows, spotting a fern before it unfurls, or seeing a Jefferson salamander wading in a vernal pool. There is so much wonder in being close to nature.

In fact, seeing the Niagara Escarpment up close is a part of our mandate. We

encourage people to experience the joy of discovery and foster a deeper relationship with the conservation corridor we are working together to protect and preserve forever.

In this issue of *Bruce Trail Conservancy Magazine*, we share the winners and finalists from our The Bruce Trail Up Close photo contest. You will be amazed by the talent of the photographers who took a closer look at the plants, animals, and insects along the Trail to reveal the details in nature we might otherwise miss.

This issue will also bring you closer to the animal kingdom, as we explore tracking some of the many of the species that call the sensitive ecosystems along the Niagara Escarpment their home. From identifying tracks, scratches and scat, to safety tips for ticks and hiking

during hunting season, this issue is full of valuable information to use the next time you're out on the Trail.

We also take a closer look at the microscopic world of lichens, the amazing organisms that are both plant and fungus. In another feature, you will learn more about the truly invaluable volunteer roles responsible for caring for these and other ecosystems across our Trail network.

As we work together to protect the Niagara Escarpment and secure permanency for the Bruce Trail, we know that the tiny things are every bit as critical and worth preserving forever. •

Michael McDonald,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



NIAGARA

niagarabruceclub.org

Merritthon – November 9, 2024

The Merritthon is a trek approximately 45 km along the first historic canal route of the Welland Canal, created by William Hamilton Merritt. The hike begins at Port Colborne, follows the Welland Canal and moves onto the Merritt Trail in St Catharines to finish in Port Dalhousie. You can expect to keep pace with giant laker ships, see industrial remnants, murals and enjoy woods and streets along the way. Registration is \$50 for members, \$60 for non-members. Fee includes bus transfers, snacks, water check points and a badge.

IROQUOIA

iroquoia.on.ca

Iroquoia End-to-End – September 14-15 & 21-22, 2024

Please join us for the annual Iroquoia Bruce Trail Club self-paced End-to-End. You can enjoy and complete the entire Iroquoia section of the Bruce Trail in 122 km over four days (approximately 30-35 km each day). These 4 days are not recommended for new hikers or anyone who hasn't completed these distances recently. Hikers are expected to maintain an average pace of 4 km/hr (or more).

The hikes will traverse the varied and often strenuous terrain from Grimbsy to the 401 in Milton. Checkpoint stations will be approximately every 10 km offering snacks, water refill, and assistance. Please bring your own First Aid Kit.

The hike is \$95 for members and \$110 for non-members and includes bus transportation from the meeting point to the hike starting point, refreshments, parking, permit costs, and the official End-to-End badge. The fee is non-refundable. After costs, the proceeds go

Content deadline for Blazes for the winter 2024-25 issue is November 1, 2024.

Send content to: Laura Tuohy, BTC Manager of Community Engagement, at ltuohy@bruceclub.org

to the Iroquoia Bruce Trail Club in support of the Bruce Trail Conservancy mission. Space is limited, hikes go rain or shine, and no dogs are permitted on this event. Registration is open at hikes.bruceclub.org. For questions, please contact Parvinder Sachdeva at pavvysingh@gmail.com

Steeltown Stomp – September 28, 2024

Looking for a distance and strength challenge? Hike over 23 km and climb 2,000 steps to complete the Iroquoia Bruce Trail Club's annual Steeltown Stomp. Registration is open and spots are filling up.

This is a 23 km self-guided hike along the Bruce Trail, the Escarpment Rail Trail, and the Chedoke Radial Trail, and climbing up and down the 7 sets of stairs along the Hamilton Escarpment. Everyone who completes the route and goes through the two checkpoints will earn the coveted Steeltown Stomp badge. Please Note: This is an arduous hike and requires a high level of fitness due to the stair climbing required. Fee: \$35 includes checkpoint snacks, badge, and helps to support the Bruce Trail Conservancy in its mission to preserve a ribbon of wilderness, for everyone, forever. Registration and details at hikes.bruceclub.org/event/steeltown-stomp-2024/



CALEDON HILLS

caledonbruceclub.org

Annual Winter Market – Every Saturday & Sunday, Nov. 30 - Dec. 15, 2024

Purchase a natural Christmas tree and support the Caledon Hills Club. Every Saturday and Sunday, 10 am - 4 pm, November 30 to December 15, 2024, while supplies last. Location:

Hockleycrest Farm. No 933445 on the east side of Airport Rd (Dufferin County Road 18). For more information visit caledonbruceclub.org or contact salydave445@gmail.com

DUFFERIN HI-LAND

dufferinbruceclub.org

American Chestnut Tree Planting – September 14, 2024

Come help the BTC and Dufferin Hi-Land Bruce Trail Club plant American Chestnut trees at our Russel property! The BTC is working with the Canadian Chestnut Council to preserve this endangered species by planting potentially resistant American Chestnut seedlings on BTC protected areas along the Niagara Escarpment.

You can be a part of this effort by helping us plant 120 of these trees on the Russel property in the Dufferin Hi-Land section. Bring gardening/work gloves and a shovel if you have one. Wear long pants and closed-toed shoes, dress for the weather and bring water and sun protection. No experience necessary - training will be provided!

Join us for this event September 14, 10 am - 1 pm. For details, directions, and to register visit hikes.bruceclub.org



Photo: BTC Staff

The long-distance hikes in these listings are challenging and not recommended for new hikers. Instead, check out the wide range of regular group hikes offered by Bruce Trail Clubs throughout the year at hikes.bruceclub.org.



**25 km Challenge –
October 19, 2024**

Come and experience the beauty of the Dufferin Hi-Land section, earn the beautiful 25 km Challenge badge, and enjoy the best of Dufferin County hospitality at our checkpoints.



The hike begins at 8:00 am at the BTC parking lot on 1st Line EHS (Rock Hill), and finishes at the same location by 5:00 pm. Cost is \$45 for members, \$55 for non-members. No children under 12 years old please. Register before October 12 on hikes.brucetrail.org.

**Buckthorn Busting at Honeywood Ridge –
October 26, 2024**

Common Buckthorn is an invasive shrub that outcompetes native plants and threatens biodiversity. Come out for a fun morning of buckthorn busting to help us remove this plant and make space for biodiversity at the BTC's Honeywood Ridge property. Small plants can be pulled by hand, while larger plants can be pulled with the help of an extractigator, which is lots of fun to use! No experience required - training will be provided. Bring gardening/work gloves, water and sunscreen, and wear long pants and closed toed shoes. Join us for this event October 26, 10 am - 12 pm. For details, directions, and to register visit hikes.brucetrail.org

**PENINSULA
pbtc.ca**



**2024 Peninsula
Hiking Festival –
October 4-5, 2024**

You are invited to “Listen to the Land” at this year’s Peninsula Hiking Festival, with programs and activities focused on exploring our connection with the land and building relationships with others in the Northern Saugeen (Bruce) Peninsula and Niagara Escarpment Biosphere. The festival will be held at Camp Celtic, near Stokes Bay, just a short drive from Lion’s Head.

Visit Club websites for more news, events and hikes.

The program begins on Friday October 4, with full-day geology hike or shorter afternoon hikes, followed by an evening social, wood-fired pizza and beverages, and musical entertainment. Saturday’s programs include both morning and afternoon hike and non-hike program options followed by an evening of dining (for an extra fee), complete with an engaging speaker and a silent auction.

Thanks to a generous grant from Bruce Power, we are pleased to offer members of the Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SON) and full-time post-secondary students a discounted fee.

Tickets are going quickly. See details and register at pbtc.ca/2024-peninsula-hiking-festival/.



Photo: Ryan Micksdorf

Pulling invasive Common Buckthorn on the BTC's Brights Property.

Bruce Trail Day - October 6, 2024

Everyone's invited to celebrate Bruce Trail Day!

Bruce Trail Day is an annual celebration of the incredible Bruce Trail and the wonders of the Niagara Escarpment, hosted by the Bruce Trail Conservancy at each of its Bruce Trail Clubs.

It's a wonderful opportunity for members to introduce friends, family and neighbours to all that we love about the Bruce Trail.

Join us for free guided hikes and family activities to help you explore the Bruce Trail and discover the amazing variety of life along the Niagara Escarpment. Come and learn about our year-round hiking programs, volunteer opportunities, and what we are doing to preserve a ribbon of wilderness in southern Ontario from Niagara to Tobermory.

Everyone is welcome!

We invite nature lovers, hikers of all levels, and anyone wanting to venture onto the Bruce Trail for the first time, or the hundredth time, to join us.

This Bruce Trail Day we are continuing our celebration of belonging - highlighting that all are welcome on the Trail and everyone can be part of the Bruce Trail Conservancy.

#BruceTrailforAll

Bring your friends to one of these Bruce Trail Day 2024 events:

| LOCATION | HOSTED BY |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Niagara College, Niagara-on-the-Lake | Niagara Bruce Trail Club |
| City View Park, Burlington | Iroquoia Bruce Trail Club |
| Limehouse Memorial Hall, Limehouse | Toronto Bruce Trail Club |
| Riverside Woods Nature Reserve, Mono | Caledon Hills Bruce Trail Club |
| Splitrock Narrows Nature Reserve, Shelburne | Dufferin Hi-Land Bruce Trail Club |
| Nottawasaga Bluffs, Duntroon | Blue Mountains Bruce Trail Club |
| Eugenia Falls, Grey Highlands | Beaver Valley Bruce Trail Club |
| Harrison Park, Owen Sound | Sydenham Bruce Trail Club |
| Cape Croker Park, Neyaashiinigmiing | Peninsula Bruce Trail Club |

Learn more at brucetrail.org/bruce-trail-day-2024

Free Sticker: Available only at Bruce Trail Day Events

Our new Bruce Trail Day 2024 sticker, designed by contest winner Crystal Byrne, features two species at risk, the Midland Painted Turtle and the Blue Karner butterfly.



"My hope for this design," Crystal shares "is to portray how important this stretch of wilderness is for everyone, from tiny butterflies to each and every person that steps foot on the Bruce Trail. This is a space that belongs to everyone and we all have a responsibility to ensure that every being feels like they belong to this space. When we move through the world like this, we walk on the earth with kinder steps, we speak kinder words and treat each other better."



Photo: Celia Ho

Murphy's Pinnacle - Dufferin Hi-Land

Two New International Friendship Trails

Join the Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC) in celebrating the official opening of two new International Friendship Trails this September.

Like twin towns, Friendship Trails aim to promote mutual publicity and international cooperation between trail organizations. A route on each trail is named in honour of the partnering trail, with on-site signage and additional information.

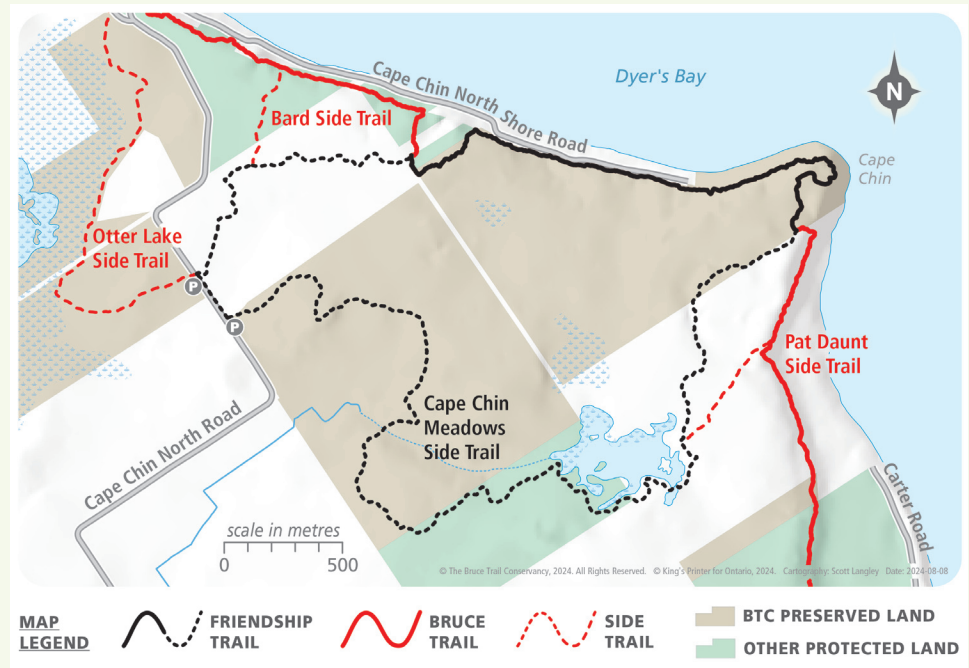
These exciting additions to the International Friendship Trails program stem from collaborations with partners in the World Trails Network. With the World Trails Conference taking place in Ottawa this fall, this is the perfect opportunity to officially open these new Friendship Trails as delegates visit Canada.

For event details and registration visit brucetrail.org/international-friendship-trail-openings/

Sharing the Bruce Trail with the World

The Bruce Trail Conservancy is excited to host these Friendship Trail events ahead of the World Trails Conference in Ottawa (Sept. 30 – Oct. 3). This is the first time the conference will be held in North America and the BTC is sending 26 staff and volunteer representatives to welcome the world and share the work of the BTC. We look forward to learning from and creating deeper connections with trail enthusiasts and organizations from around the globe.

South West Coast Path Friendship Trail – Peninsula Section



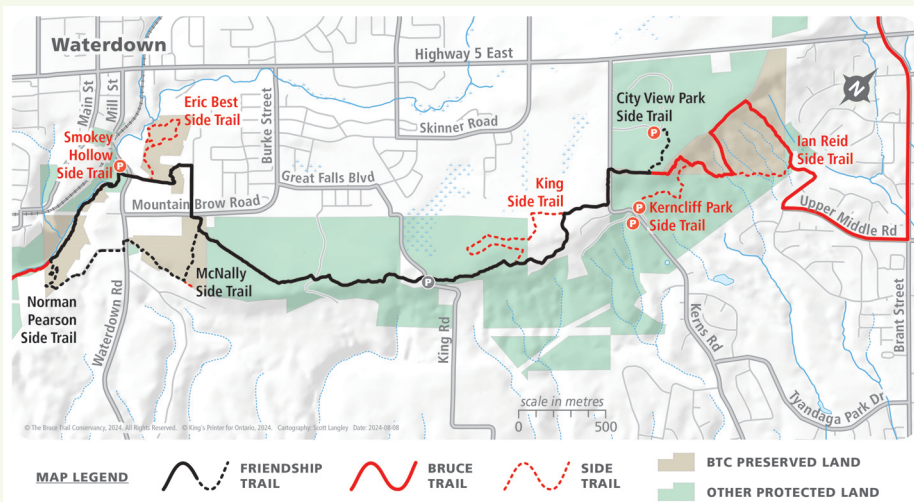
Opening: **September 26, 2024 at 10:00 am**

Location: **MapleCross Nature Reserve at Cape Chin**

Representatives from the South West Coast Path (England) and the BTC, alongside volunteers from the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club, will gather to celebrate the opening of this new Friendship Trail. The South West Coast Path, the longest established National Trail in the UK, stretches 1014 km (630 miles) along the southern coastline of England from Somerset through Cornwall into Devon and Dorset, ending at Poole Harbour. Known for its spectacular coastal views, rocky cliffs, and diverse flora, it pairs beautifully with the Peninsula section of the Bruce Trail, which boasts similar features along Georgian Bay. The new Friendship Trail will be twinned with a section of the South West Coast Path that runs from the old fishing village of Cawsand in Cornwall, along the Plymouth city waterfront and the Devon coast to Wembury. Learn more at www.southwestcoastpath.org.uk.

Mountains to Sea Greenway Friendship Trail – Iroquoia Section

Opening: **September 28, 2024 at 10:00 am** Location: **City View Park, Burlington**



Visitors from the Taiwan Thousand Miles Trail Association will join BTC staff and volunteers in Burlington for the grand opening of the Mountains to Sea Greenway Friendship Trail. The Mountains to Sea Greenway (MSTW) is a stunning 177 km trail in southwestern Taiwan running from the Yanshuei River estuary to Jade Mountain, the highest peak in East Asia. The Bruce Trail between City View Park and Grindstone Creek will be twinned with the Tefuye Historical Trail section of the Mountains to Sea Greenway. The 6.4 km Tefuye Historical Trail has deep ties to the diverse ethnic cultures of Taiwan, including the local Indigenous Tso community, and features much of Taiwan's natural beauty. Running from Tefuye to Zizhong through magnificent cedar forests, it follows a preserved section of the old Shuishan Forest Railway Line. Learn more at www.tmitrail.org.tw/en/MSTW.

Conservation in Action: New Protected Areas

Hundreds of donors have stepped forward in recent months, enabling crucial wins for conservation and trail continuity. This generosity has preserved the longest remaining section of Georgian Bay shoreline, preserved wetlands and woodlands, and secured another 1.2 km of Bruce Trail on permanently protected natural land.

Sunrise Shores Nature Reserve – Peninsula section

Map 37, Hope Bay

64 acres | 630 m of Optimum Route

Nestled between Barrow Bay and Rush Cove along the pristine waters of Georgian Bay, Sunrise Shores Nature Reserve is a spectacular natural sanctuary that showcases the diverse beauty of the Niagara Escarpment. This 64-acre nature reserve is an essential addition to our ribbon of wilderness in this area as it completes a 560-acre continuous conservation corridor. Sunrise Shores Nature Reserve features stunning Georgian Bay shoreline, where turquoise waters lap against ancient stones. This was the longest section of the shoreline that had yet to be protected.

The sanctuary features a variety of habitats. A mature Sugar Maple forest supports wildflowers and ferns that grow in the nutrient-rich pockets of Escarpment soil, and Black Bear and Fisher which need large tracts of land to thrive. Forests such

as these are also vital for species at risk, including the Eastern Wood Pewee and Wood Thrush. The 100-foot dolostone cliffs are home to resilient Eastern White Cedars that cling to the stone while the crevices and scarp features along the cliffs provide sanctuary to reptiles and bats, promoting a healthy ecosystem.

Thanks to the generosity of over 930 donors, this breathtaking nature reserve and the 630 metres of Bruce Trail that wind through it are forever safeguarded, allowing nature to flourish and visitors to experience the beauty of the area for generations to come.



Sunrise Shores Nature Reserve – Peninsula section



Black Bear adult with cub at Sunrise Shores Nature Reserve this spring.

Photo: Michael McDonald

Photo: Brian Popellier



Sheryl & Jim Phillips Easement – Beaver Valley section

Photo: Brian Popelier

Sheryl & Jim Phillips Easement – Beaver Valley section

Map 25, Kolapore Uplands
18 acres

Thanks to the generous support of the Phillips family, the Bruce Trail Conservancy has secured the Sheryl & Jim Phillips Easement. Situated north of Kolapore Uplands in the Town of the Blue Mountains, this property plays a crucial role in preserving a permanent route for the Bruce Trail through the area.

This easement is also the result of a creative partnership with Ontario Farmland Trust (OFT). The Phillips family donated an easement to OFT to protect farmland, and included a trail easement for the BTC. BTC staff enjoyed working with OFT staff on this mutually beneficial initiative and look forward to similar collaborations in the future.

While mainly important for Trail continuity, the easement showcases Escarpment features and woodland habitat. This thoughtful donation ensures that the Bruce Trail will remain intact and off the nearby roads for generations of hikers to enjoy.

Croaks Hollow – Blue Mountains section

Map 24, Blue Mountains
44 acres | 600 m of Optimum Route

Croaks Hollow adds 44 acres to the BTC’s conservation corridor in the scenic Blue Mountains. Sitting north of our Swiss Meadows property and adjacent to Craigeith Ski Club and Blue Mountain Resort, this property secures 600 metres of Optimum Route and offers a serene hiking alternative away from the bustling ski lifts. In addition to being key to connectivity, Croaks Hollow has the space suitable for potential future trail user amenities, such as parking.

Croaks Hollow gets its evocative name from the frogs and toads that find refuge in the small but productive wetlands and wooded areas of the property. In the springtime, these amphibians can be heard welcoming the warmer weather with a loud chorus. These wetland habitats are natural sanctuaries not only for amphibians, but for a host of bird and mammal species.

The Blue Mountains is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Canada. The pressure of land development is causing the fragmentation and degradation of natural habitat, and the Blue Mountain sub-watershed has seen considerable losses in wetland cover in recent years. Securing this land protects these valuable ecosystems while also improving the Bruce Trail experience for all who explore the beauty of the Blue Mountains. •



Northern Flicker

Photo: Brian Popelier



Croaks Hollow – Blue Mountains section

Photo: Brian Popelier

Winner: Carl Tafel
Frog on Pine River Valley Side Trail
Dufferin Hi-Land Section



Brilliant Details of the Bruce Trail

The Bruce Trail Up Close Photo Contest Winners and Finalists

By Ali Schofield

In the summer issue of *Bruce Trail Conservancy Magazine*, we asked you to show us life on the Bruce Trail through close-up photography. We received over 400 submissions, which included a wide variety of plants, animals and insects, showcasing some of the incredible biodiversity we are working to preserve along the Niagara Escarpment.

It has been inspiring to see what in our conservation corridor made you take a closer look. We received photos of delicate orchids and trilliums, passing snakes and salamanders, mossy crags and sparkling quartz hidden in the landscape. Frogs and fungi were favourites of many photographers – a

few are even finalists. We were also happy to see some snapshots of our white blazes, a variety of structures, and you and your pets enjoying the trail! (A friendly reminder though, please keep dogs on a leash when you're on the Trail, especially as we enter hunting season – see page 24.)

Choosing ten finalists was extremely difficult. So many submissions demonstrated creativity with perspective and light, great timing and, of course, plenty of attention to detail. We are grateful to everyone who took the time to show us the small things that make our ribbon of wilderness so special.

We hope you enjoy *The Bruce Trail Up Close!*



Runner-Up: Kat Forbes
Tiny friend amongst the phragmites
Niagara Section



Runner-Up: Marsha Courtney
Scaly Ink Cap
Sydenham Section

Kristina Mikloska
Bubble bubble toil and trouble! Yellow spotted salamander in the bubbles of the creek getting ready to lay her eggs.
Toronto Section



Adam Scott
Cooper's Hawks
Iroquoia Section

Elhana Dyck
Watch your Step!
Beaver Valley Section



Ellie Hamel
Beneath the Canopy
Peninsula Section



Peter Giesbrecht
Defiant pollinator, Inglis Falls
Sydenham Section



Laurie Menard
A very hairy hepatica
bud in the early stages
of blooming on the
Louth Side Trail
Niagara Section



Felix Wan
Near Silver Creek Conservation Area
Toronto Section



Photo: Celia Ho

Up Close and Personal

Get to know the Bruce Trail by becoming a volunteer

By Ali Schofield

If you're reading this, chances are you enjoy being on the Bruce Trail. Perhaps you even have a favourite section or natural area. Have you ever thought about getting to know the Trail in another way, or sharing your love of the Trail with others? Volunteer positions across our nine Bruce Trail Clubs provide the perfect opportunity.

Enjoy More Time on the Trail

If you are interested in spending more time on the Trail, there are several options for getting more involved. For instance, volunteering as a **Trail Monitor** or **Trail Captain** is a great way to become intimately familiar with a specific section. These volunteers are assigned a portion of Trail 1-4 km in length and perform

regular maintenance to keep the area safe, navigable, and laying lightly on the land. This can include painting blazes, trimming grass or overhanging vegetation, picking up litter, and reporting any areas in need of repair.

For a chance to get to know other volunteers as you get closer to the Bruce Trail, **Trail Development and Maintenance work parties** might be right for you. The activities of each Club can vary, but typically these volunteers help maintain the Trail by building and repairing infrastructure, creating or re-routing sections of trail, constructing viewing platforms and taking on any larger trail projects that require many hands.

Get Closer to Nature

For those with an interest in ecology and a desire to really get to know one of the Bruce Trail Conservancy's protected natural areas, a **Land Steward** role may be just the right fit. Each of the more

than 300 properties in the Bruce Trail Conservancy's care has a Land Steward assigned to it. Their role is to monitor the property in every season and carry out activities that help to enhance its ecological health. As more land comes into the care of the BTC, our land stewardship needs will only grow.

*"When I started volunteering as hike leader, I wanted to gain experience and make connections... I continue to lead hikes because of the joy they bring to participants. I also learn something new about myself, about human nature, about the Bruce Trail, or about outdoor leadership every time I take a group out."**



Photo: Gary Hall



"Whenever I'm working on the trail, people who are hiking through always stop to thank me, which shows me that our work is appreciated and valued."

To take on larger stewardship projects and engage more people in conservation, some Clubs have established **Biodiversity Committees**. These teams of volunteers develop special projects or programming to support the breadth of wildlife and native species within our ribbon of wilderness. They take action to restore ecological health along our conservation corridor, care for the species that call it home, and educate the public on the critical importance of our conservation work.

"I've loved organizing restoration projects and sharing the joy of volunteers for tree planting. So rewarding! It's also a pleasure to work with [people] who are passionate about conservation and land stewardship."

Help Others Make a Connection

Bringing people into closer connection with nature is another important part of the Bruce Trail Conservancy's mission, and there are several volunteer opportunities that support community outreach and engagement.

Joining an organized hike is one of the first ways many people get to know the Bruce Trail, making **Hike Leaders** critical volunteers in every Club section. These individuals receive special training to help others safely explore the Bruce Trail through guided hikes at varying degrees of difficulty. Hike leaders with particular interests, knowledge or skills can provide themed hikes, deepening the experience for hikers.

Becoming a **Trail Angel** is another great way (literally) connect people to the Trail and is a good fit for those looking for an occasional role, have access to

a vehicle, and love meeting people. These volunteers provide transportation to solo or small groups of hikers – helping with a car shuttle or providing short distance pick-ups or drop-offs at Trail access points. With a little coordination, these volunteers support hikers, offer insights about the Trail or recommendations for visiting the area.

Our Clubs also need volunteers with a variety of skills, interests and experience that may not be as obvious. People who are interested in writing, understand social media, or have experience in public speaking or event coordination are needed across our Clubs for roles in **Promotions, Communications** and **Outreach Events** like Bruce Trail Day. With room for creativity and a flexible time commitment, these volunteers help grow our community and keep members informed.

Are You Ready to Get up Close and Personal with the Bruce Trail?

These are just some of the many volunteer roles that drive engagement, encourage care for nature, and help others have a positive experience on the Bruce Trail. Every effort made by volunteers helps people safely explore the Trail and better understand and care for the Niagara Escarpment.



"We have fun, get some exercise, enjoy nature, and learn from each other."

Volunteers are at the heart of so much of what we do at the Bruce Trail Conservancy. Over 60 years ago, it was a passionate group of volunteers who started us on our journey, and to this day, our work wouldn't be possible without them.

We're continuously grateful to those who give their time — on the Trail and behind the scenes — to bring people closer to nature, and to preserve a ribbon of wilderness for generations to come.

To learn more and apply to volunteer, visit brucetrail.org/ways-to-get-involved •

"This trail is so important to me and was the reason I moved to the community. Being a volunteer helps assure that future generations can continue to enjoy its beauty."

* All quotes in this article are comments from the BTC's 2023 volunteer survey

Looking for Lichen

By Laura Tuohy



Photo: Shutterstock

They are all around us, yet so often overlooked. Growing on rocks, trees, soil, even on sidewalks are living patches of colour and texture. Grab a magnifying glass on your next Bruce Trail hike and immerse yourself in a tiny world of wonder and interconnectedness – the world of lichen.

You've likely walked past them a million times. They may appear as fuzzy growths on a fallen branch, flattened leaves on the forest floor, or smears of colour on a rocky outcrop. But look closer (much closer) at lichens and you'll find complex structures in a myriad of shapes, colours, and sizes, like a miniature coral reef. In fact, corals and lichen have more in common than you might expect. Both gain their nutrients from what drifts by. Both are sensitive to disturbances and pollution. And both are the result of multiple organisms working together.

Though these 'corals of the forest' may look like moss or fungi, lichens are neither. Lichens are remarkable symbiotic organisms – a partnership between a fungus and an alga (and/or a cyanobacterium). They depend on each other and this association is so tight that usually neither partner can grow or

reproduce without the other.

The fungus makes up most of the lichen body and provides structure and protection while the alga and/or cyanobacteria living within the fungus photosynthesize, producing sugars that fuel the lichen's growth. Lichens have no roots and take other nutrients and minerals directly from the atmosphere.

To help remember this odd partnership, you might say "a fungus and an alga took a 'lichen' to each other" though this pun only hints at the complexity of lichen life. In addition to a fungus and an alga, a lichen may contain cyanobacteria, yeasts, and a diverse community of microorganisms whose functions are still not fully understood. Lichens as life forms are like mini-ecosystems.

This integrated set of relationships means that, far from being

inconsequential, lichens play key roles in terrestrial ecosystems, and can teach us much about how those ecosystems are functioning.

Self-sustaining Pioneers

The rocky outcrops along the Bruce Trail usually encourage us to cast our gaze toward the expansive views. But if we look down at our feet, we can witness hearty pioneers at work - crustose lichens on the bare rock surface.



Three foliose lichen species on a branch

Photo: Jacob Toldi



Photo: Brian Popelier

British soldier lichen (*Cladonia cristatella*)



Photo: Jason L. Miller

Hooded sunburst lichen (*Xanthomendoza fallax*) and others

The symbiotic nature of lichens allows them to be self-sustaining which makes them great at colonizing seemingly barren areas. Where a typical fungus takes its energy and nutrients from the wood or soil in which it grows, a lichen gets its energy from the sun, and its nutrients directly from the air and water that wash over it. This enables lichens to grow without soil and makes them key pioneer species. They can grow on bare rock and are often some of the first organisms to colonize an area after a natural disaster or disturbance. As they grow in these barren places, they capture dirt and moisture, beginning the process of soil formation. Lichens can also grow directly on soil, where they play an important role in erosion control.

Nitrogen Fixers and Nutrient Cyclers

Lichens have another secret way they support the brilliant and diverse plant life that we see on our hikes. They can fix nitrogen, an element essential to plant growth. The nitrogen found in air is not usable by most living organisms. Fortunately, the cyanobacteria partners in some lichen have the ability to capture atmospheric nitrogen and change it into a usable form of nitrogen that eventually finds its way into the soil for plants and other organisms to use.

Environmental Monitors

Because of the way lichens grow they can reveal much about the environment in which they're found.

Lichens grow extremely slowly. From 7 millimetres a year for the fastest-growing forms to as little as 0.5 millimetres a year. In nature, the presence of healthy, mature lichens is a sign that a site is relatively undisturbed. When you see lichen, you can assume that what it is growing on hasn't moved in a very long time. The larger the lichen the longer it has been since any disturbance. As a result, lichens are starting to be used indicators of forest stand age and conservation value.

Lichens are also sensitive to air pollution and have become important indicators of air quality. Since they absorb most of their mineral nutrients from the air and rainfall, lichens can accumulate large amounts of potentially damaging pollutants. Some lichens are more sensitive to air pollution than others and so will disappear first if conditions are too polluted. Other lichens tolerate pollution or even depend on it. So the abundance and types of lichen found in an area, and the concentration of pollutants measured in those lichens, can tell us a lot about air quality. The most sensitive lichens are

shrubby and leafy, while the most tolerant lichens tend to be crusty in appearance.

Providers for Wildlife

Creatures from mammals to insects use lichen for habitat, food and shelter. On the Niagara Escarpment, animals like deer and squirrels eat lichen, often relying on them in the winter months when their preferred foods become unavailable. Lichen patches can also support a tiny world of invertebrates, which in turn become feeding spots for insectivorous birds and mammals.

Some animals such as Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, and Northern Flying Squirrels use lichens as nesting material – likely benefitting from their waterproofing, insulating and camouflaging properties.

Lichen can even give us clues about wildlife activity. Some lichen – like the bright orange sunburst lichens – thrive in the nutrient enriched environments created where creatures leave their waste. Crow roosts, chickadee perches, rocky outcrops, coyote dens, favourite branches of squirrels or owls – all of these lounging sites can provide habitat for sunburst lichens.



Photo: S. Freeman

Ruby-throated Hummingbird in its nest made with lichen

Orange-cored Shadow Lichen
(*Phaeophyscia rubropulchra*)



Photo: Andrew Sebastian

Seeing the Forest for the Lichen

Lichens along the Bruce Trail have much to tell us about the ecosystems in which they grow, if we take the time to look closer.

They can show us where animals have been active, how old or disturbed an area is, and the quality of the air. Their presence and diversity enrich and support healthy ecosystems. They can be a doorway to appreciating the interconnectedness of all living things and the importance of protecting our planet.

Lichens may have been a blur in the background of your hikes; but once you get an eye for lichens, you'll be rewarded with their beauty and what they reveal about the areas you are exploring. •

What do Lichens Look Like?

Lichens have three major growth forms: crustose, foliose and fruticose. Identifying lichens to species can be tricky, but getting familiar with these growth forms can help.



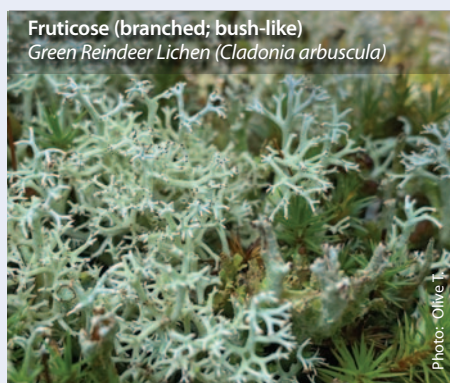
Crustose (crust-like)
Yellow Map Lichen (*Rhizocarpon geographicum*)

Photo: Carl Adam Wegerschlamm



Foliose (leaf-like)
Pelt Lichen (*Peltigera* sp.)

Photo: E. Campbell



Fruticose (branched; bush-like)
Green Reindeer Lichen (*Cladonia arbuscula*)

Photo: Olive T.



Fruticose (branched; hair-like)
Boreal Beard Lichen (*Usnea subfloridana*)

Photo: Brian Popelier



Pixie Cup Lichen (*Cladonia* sp.)

Photo: Brian Popelier



Powderhorn Lichen (*Cladonia coniocraea*)

Photo: Olive T.

Where to Look for Lichen

Lichens can grow on almost any undisturbed, unpolluted surface with enough sun and occasional moisture. Look for them:

- On wood: trunks or branches of older trees, and fallen branches
- On rock: rock outcrops, cliffs, and shoreline rocks
- On bare soil
- On human-made structures: fenceposts, stone walls, gravestones
- On animal structures: nests
- In space: Specimens of Elegant Sunburst Lichen survived for 18 months attached to the outside of the International Space Station!

When to Look for Lichen

- After a rainfall: When lichens are dry, they are hard and their colours are muted since the photosynthetic partner is inactive. After a rain, the algae or cyanobacteria become active and their bright colours shine through.
- Any season: Lichens are visible year-round, though late fall may be one of the best seasons for spotting lichen, without the distraction of a lush understory or vibrant leafy branches.

Learn More About Lichen

- *Lichens: The Macrolichens of Ontario and the Great Lakes Region of the United States*, Troy McMullin (2023)
- *The Secret World of Lichens: A Young Naturalist's Guide*, Troy McMullin (2022)
- *Lichens and Allied Fungi of Ontario*. iNaturalist project of Natural Heritage Information Centre (NHIC) and Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF)

TICKS AND THE BRUCE TRAIL

Ticks are an unfortunate reality for hikers and the diseases that they can carry can be worrisome. With a few simple precautions you can reduce the risk of tick encounters while hiking.

With milder winters in southern Ontario in recent years, tick numbers have increased significantly. As their populations expand, so does the potential risk of tick-borne illnesses, like Lyme disease.

Ticks may seem like a summer problem, but they can be active anytime the temperature is above freezing. While this means that you need to be tick-aware throughout the year, you can still enjoy your hike by taking proper precautions and knowing what to do if you find a tick on yourself or a pet.

Preventing Tick Bites

- **Stay on the Trail:** Avoid bushy areas and long grass, and stay near the centre of the trail.
- **Cover up:** Wear closed footwear and socks. Wear long pants and a long-sleeved shirt and tuck your pants into your socks. Wear light-colored clothing, so it's easier to see ticks.
- **Use insect repellent:** Apply repellent that has at least 30% DEET or 20% icaridin to your exposed skin and clothing.
- **Do a Tick Check:** Search your clothes and body thoroughly for ticks after every hike. Consider bringing packing tape to pat down your clothes and remove any ticks before heading home. At home pay special attention to areas such as the groin, scalp, armpits and behind ears. Use a mirror to check the back of your body or have someone else check it for you.
- **Clean yourself and your clothes:** Shower in hot water after a hike. Wash your clothing or put it in the dryer to remove any ticks.

Preventing Ticks on Your Dog

Dogs can also contract Lyme disease, and being closer to the ground they are more likely to pick up a tick. If you hike with your dog:

- **Talk to your vet** before hitting the Trail to ensure your dog is up to date with their flea and tick medication.
- **Keep your dog on a leash** and on the Trail. Your dog is more likely to pick up a tick if they go off Trail into taller grasses and brush.
- **Check your dog for ticks** throughout the hike. Consider bringing a brush or comb on the hike to help check their fur.
- **Check again when you get home** by giving your dog a thorough brush. Ticks are especially drawn to elbows, armpits, groin, stomach, and the area under the collar.

Blacklegged Tick (aka Deer Tick) *Ixodes scapularis*

SIZE: 2-2.5 MM
Can transmit Lyme disease though the bite of an infected tick.



Dog Tick *Dermacentor variabilis*

SIZE: 3-5 MM
Does NOT transmit Lyme disease. Generally more common than Blacklegged ticks.



Images courtesy of URI Tick Encounter Resource Centre

Removing Ticks

If you find a tick on you, your child or your dog, remove it promptly. This will help prevent infection since transmission of the Lyme disease bacteria usually requires the tick to be attached for more than 24 hours. If you choose to remove the tick yourself, follow these steps:

- Using fine-tipped tweezers, carefully grasp the tick as close to your skin as possible. Pull it straight out, gently but firmly.
- Try not to squeeze the tick; you may accidentally introduce any tick-borne bacteria into your body.
- Before disposing of the tick, call or check the website of your local public health unit to get advice on how to identify the tick. You can also submit a photo of the tick to etick.ca for identification. Wash the bite site with soap and water.
- Monitor the bite site. If you develop a fever, rash, muscle and/or joint aches, flu-like symptoms or become ill, be sure to mention to your doctor possible tick exposure.

Looking for a tick-removal kit to carry in your pack?

The BTC Store now sells Tick First Aid Kits! Get yours at <https://brucetrail.org/product/tick-first-aid-kit/>



Staying Safe to Enjoy Hiking

Ticks and Lyme disease are a concern for everyone who enjoys outdoor activities but your chances of contracting Lyme disease on the Bruce Trail are quite low and should not interfere with your enjoyment of the Niagara Escarpment. By adopting these habits to protect yourself from tick bites, you can feel more confident and take pleasure in your hike.

For more information, please consult ontario.ca/lyme.

Signs of Life: Reading nature's stories on a fall walk

By Laura Tuohy

Photo: Laura Tuohy

I packed my binoculars on that late October day.

I was getting ready to head to the Bruce Trail Conservancy's McNally Nature Reserve in Waterdown for one of my regular monitoring visits as a land steward volunteer. It's become a bit of a joke in my family that when I pack my nice big binoculars, we don't see anything, and when I leave them at home, everything comes out. This day, I was tempting fate and hoping to catch a glimpse of some of the creatures that make their home at McNally Nature Reserve.

It had been raining the previous few days and I was expecting that wildlife would be a little more active now that the rain had stopped. Arriving at the site, things were quiet. I scanned the skies, shrubs and forest edge for the flash of a bird or the rustle of a red squirrel. Nothing yet. That's all right. I could be patient.

Starting down the trail, I reached down to pick up an errant granola bar wrapper when something caught my eye. A clump

of moist dark pellets. Not granola bar bits but something more...scatological.

Droppings, poop, number two. Whatever you call it, animal scat can tell you a lot about who else is visiting the trail. In this case, I was looking at a clump of dark brown pellets, so I knew they had been left by a mammal, and an herbivorous one at that. The scat wasn't tubular like that left by mammalian carnivores (like foxes) or omnivores (like racoons). It didn't have the shape or distinctive single white end of bird and reptile droppings. The pellets seemed too smooth and oval-shaped to be from a rabbit. As if to confirm my hunch, there in the mud on the trail ahead was the heart-shaped hoof print of a White-tailed Deer, the tip of the heart pointing in the direction the deer must have been walking after it left its package. The moist and clumped nature of the droppings indicated that the deer had lots of fresh vegetation to eat, and rather recently.

That reminded me: I should check on



Photo: Laurita DiCesare



Photo: Bryant Eddy

those tree saplings. I headed to the open meadow where BTC volunteers had planted native trees the previous year. I found the nearest sapling and peered down into the 'tree guard' that was keeping the small tree protected from browsing animals like deer. The sapling looked good, but there did seem to be a funny growth on its trunk. On closer inspection I saw what looked like a large tan-coloured pillbug or trilobite made of Styrofoam.

Perplexed, I opened the iNaturalist app on my phone and snapped a photo to share it with the BTC's iNaturalist project. In a moment, the automated species identification tool built into iNaturalist identified the 'growth' as belonging to a European Mantis (aka praying mantis). I had found an egg case (or ootheca) produced by a female mantis, probably the previous fall. In this sheltered location she laid her eggs in in a foam of protein that hardened onto the trunk and protected the eggs through the winter. The young mantises must have long since hatched and this case was the only sign they were here.

A while later I took a short break in the lovely mature Sugar Maple forest on the property. This is where Scout troops and corporate volunteer groups have helped the BTC to remove and control invasive Garlic Mustard, and I was starting to see

the progress they had made. It's also where I'd hoped to see some of the creatures that need larger forested areas to thrive. But things were frustratingly quiet.

Looking up from the rock where I was sitting, I noticed a neat horizontal row of shallow holes in the trunk of a nearby maple, looking as though they had been drilled by a precise and persistent cabinet maker. These were the tell-tale signs of the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Ontario's nine woodpecker species can be tricky to tell apart by sight, but the hole patterns made by the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker are nearly unmistakable.

I imagined the scene from early that spring. Steadying itself on the trunk with its stiff tail, the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker would have drilled a small series of holes into the bark and then waited for tree sap to fill the holes. With its long brushy tongue, it lapped up the sugary sap along with any insects that may have been caught there. These holes would have also created a bounty for migrating hummingbirds, red squirrels and other creatures that wouldn't otherwise have had access to such a carbohydrate rich food so early in the spring. I finished my own snack and moved on.

Time to check the perimeter of the property – one of the important tasks during a land steward visit. This takes me off the trail for the purposes of fully monitoring the nature reserve, looking for any signs of misuse or damage, and contributing to the growing record of what grows and lives on the property.



Photo: Jeanine Kraft

Was that another piece of trash wedged between those rocks? With a sigh I took a closer look and was surprised to see the ghostly outline of a snake. Not a snake exactly, rather the shed skin of a snake. Like an empty, pale, scale-for-scale replica of its owner.

Snakes shed their skins a few times a year to accommodate a growing body and to remove parasites or damage affecting their skin. Amazingly they shed it all at once, starting by rubbing their head on something abrasive to open a



Photo: Breandan McCallister

tear, then wriggling out of their old skin like peeling off a long sock. The shelter and roughness of these rocks must have been the perfect place to help the snake during this risky shedding process.

It was hard to tell what species of snake it was. Ontario has 17 species and subspecies of snakes, and 9 of them are provincially at risk. Unfortunately, there's not much of the shed skin left. Being so late in the year, I was surprised to find a shed skin at all that hadn't already been eaten, used as bird nest material, or has decomposed. With a more complete skin, and the help of iNaturalist or other experts, we could identify the species based on scale pattern, size and shape. For the time being, I was simply pleased to know that snakes are at home in this protected forest.

For the rest of my visit, I enjoyed discovering more tracks, scats and signs, no longer stuck on having a National Geographic-style wildlife moment. On the way home, I was struck by the number of creatures I had encountered at McNally Nature Reserve without even laying eyes or ears on them.

Despite not seeing a single furred, feathered or scaly creature that day, I was given a window into the individual lives of some of the diverse mammals, birds, reptiles and insects with whom we share the Niagara Escarpment. And I didn't even have to bring the binoculars. •



Hiking in Hunting Season

There's nothing quite like exploring the Bruce Trail in the fall. With cooler temperatures, the warm-hued autumn leaves against blue skies, and barely a bug in sight, it's no wonder it's a popular season for hiking.

While there are a lot of advantages to hiking in the fall, it's important to keep in mind that hikers aren't the only ones getting outside; with these ideal conditions and increased animal activity, fall is also a popular time of year for hunting.

In Conservation Areas, Provincial and National Parks, and Bruce Trail Conservancy lands hunting is generally prohibited. However, the Trail also passes through or near county forests, private properties, and certain public lands where hunting is allowed with the landowner's permission.

Stay safe on trails during hunting season by following these tips.

Be aware

Know when and where hunting is allowed. Hunting seasons vary by region, by animal, and by the permitted method of hunting (e.g. bow hunting or rifles). You can find detailed information at: www.ontario.ca/page/hunting

Some parts of the Trail may be closed or partially closed to hikers during hunting season. As always, check for

any Trail changes or closures before your hike at brucetrail.org/trail_changes, or in the Bruce Trail app, and follow any signage you see on the Trail.

If you'd rather not hike on lands where hunting is allowed, choose trails in popular parks or near cities and towns.

Typically, the farther north you are on the Trail, the more likely you will be to encounter hunters. Check park websites to confirm if hunting is allowed.

Be seen

Avoid wearing dark clothing and opt for bright colours instead. Consider wearing a fluorescent or bright orange piece of clothing such as a hat, shirt, vest, or bandana to help you be seen.

In need of a new hat or a flash of colour? The BTC Store carries an orange toque that's perfect for staying seen during hunting season and beyond. Get yours at brucetrail.org/store

Be heard

Talk to your fellow hikers or sing a tune while hiking so that hunters know you're in the vicinity. Consider carrying

Hunting Seasons

The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) regulates hunting in the province. Dates and locations vary based on the type of animal and the style of hunting, and change from year to year.

The most popular hunting seasons on the Niagara Escarpment are:

- **Fall Deer Hunt:**
Mid-September to end of December
- **Spring Wild Turkey Hunt:**
Mid-April to end of May

Find details at:

www.ontario.ca/page/hunting

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT UNITS

To find hunting season details from the MNRF, it helps to know what Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) or region you are hiking in.

Here are the WMUs that the Bruce Trail passes through:

| | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Peninsula | 83A |
| Sydenham | 82A, 82B |
| Beaver Valley | 82A |
| Blue Mountains | 82A, 81B |
| Dufferin Hi-Land | 81A, 81B |
| Caledon Hills | 77B, 78D, 81B |
| Toronto | 79D, 79C |
| Iroquoia | 79D, 87D, 87E, 88 |
| Niagara | 88 |

a whistle to let hunters know that you are nearby if you hear gunshots.

Protect your pet

As always, keep your dog on leash and on the Trail. The sound of a gunshot can scare dogs, causing them to run off. Have your dog wear an orange or fluorescent harness or bandana so that it's not mistaken for wildlife.

Avoid hiking at dawn or dusk

This is when hunters will be most active and when visibility is low.

Stay on the trail

Many hunters are aware of the Bruce Trail and will avoid hunting near it. As you would at any other time of the year, stay on the blazed Trail. •

Support Nature's Gifts Year-round



Monthly donations ensure that future generations can experience the recurring gifts of nature.

Whether it's the migrating birds of spring, the chorus of frogs in summer, or the vibrant bloom of wildflowers in the fall, these are just some of the recurring gifts of nature made possible by the sanctuary of a conservation corridor.

Our conservation corridor on the Niagara Escarpment has grown thanks to so many of you who have supported the Bruce Trail Conservancy's efforts to secure land and create permanently protected natural areas.

Securing land, however, is just the beginning.

Once land is in the care of the BTC, work in the field for our land stewardship and trail development teams begins in earnest. These teams are crucially engaged in the review and decision-making processes for securing properties, and as soon as the BTC takes ownership, their work ramps up.

The excitement of the first visit to a new property is palpable. Will there be sightings of species at risk or evidence of rare habitat? Do any restoration opportunities exist? How can the Trail be routed to best highlight natural features, while treading lightly on the land?

Exploring and assessing properties takes more than one visit. Implementing land management plans to support biodiversity and responsibly connect people with nature is a year-round effort. It's critical work that requires dedicated and skilled resources across the organization.

In choosing to become a monthly donor, you can support essential programs like these year-round efforts to nurture a healthy and biodiverse conservation corridor.

Your monthly donations will help to ensure that you and future generations can continue to experience the recurring gifts of nature on the Niagara Escarpment with every visit.

Donate today!

Enrol at brucetrail.org/donate-monthly or by mail at:
Bruce Trail Conservancy, PO Box 857, Hamilton ON L8N 3N9 | Phone: 1-800-665-4453

Yes! I want to support essential programs with monthly donations.

\$15/month \$20/month \$35/month \$50/month \$_____ Other/month

Payment by: Cheque (payable to The Bruce Trail Conservancy or marked "Void" if setting up a monthly donation) Mastercard Visa

Card #: _____ Expiry: _____ CVV: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Member# _____ Email: _____

Your email is confidential and will not be shared with third parties.

I am interested in learning more about making a gift to the Bruce Trail Conservancy in my will. I have included the Bruce Trail Conservancy in my will.

Trail Changes & Notices

JUNE - AUGUST 2024, POST EDITION 31

FOR THE LATEST TRAIL CHANGE AND NOTICES, VISIT BRUCETRAIL.ORG/TRAIL_CHANGES

Trail Changes & Notices are online and in the Bruce Trail App

Visit brucetrail.org/trail_changes for the latest changes, searchable by Map Number, Club Section, and even by text in the description.

Download the **Bruce Trail App** to have the most up-to-date trail data on your mobile device.

Reservations Required

Be prepared to make parking reservations at some parks and conservation areas along the Bruce Trail. Parking reservations are currently required or recommended for:

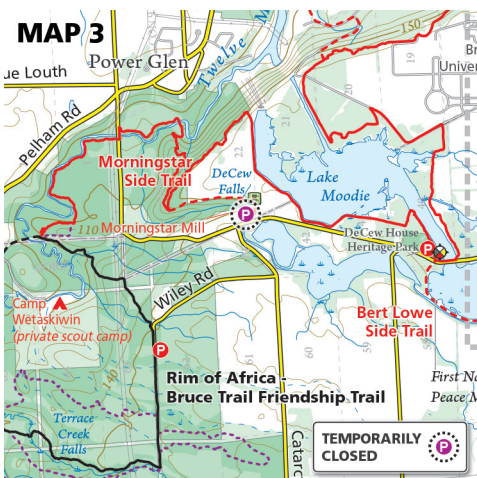
- Hamilton Conservation Authority (conservationhamilton.ca): Spencer Gorge CA (Webster Falls, Tew Falls, Dundas Peak)
- Conservation Halton (conservationhalton.ca): Mount Nemo, Rattlesnake Point, Crawford Lake, Hilton Falls CAs
- Ontario Parks (reservations.ontarioparks.com): Forks of the Credit, Mono Cliffs
- Ontario Heritage Trust (www.heritagetrust.on.ca): Cheltenham Badlands
- Credit Valley Conservation (cvc.ca): Belfountain CA
- Lion's Head, McCurdy Drive (www.northernbruceparking.ca)
- Little Cove Road (www.northernbruceparking.ca)
- Bruce Peninsula National Park (pc.gc.ca/bruce): The Grotto / Cyprus Lake and Halfway Dump

NIAGARA

Map 3 – Morningstar Mill, Temporary Closure

The Morningstar Mill site (2714 Decew Rd, St Catharines) is closed to the public from June 3 until Nov. 30, 2024, to allow for the completion of a construction project. Parking will not be available on site, but the Morningstar Side Trail will be accessible. For more information see this notice from the City of St Catharines:

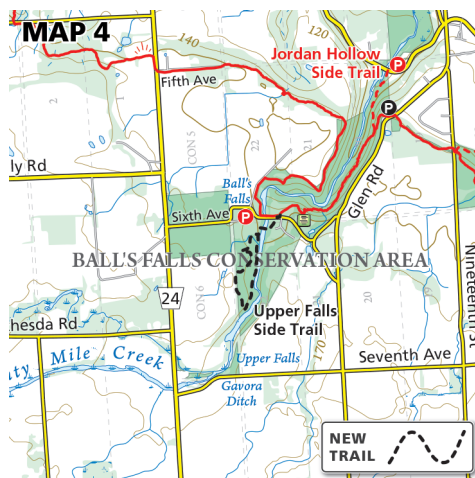
www.stcatharines.ca/en/news/morningstar-mill-closure.aspx



Map 4 – Ball's Falls Conservation Area, New Side Trail

A new looping trail – Upper Falls Side Trail – has been blazed in Ball's Falls Conservation Area. This side trail passes through Ball's Falls pioneer village and follows Twenty Mile Creek to reach a viewing area at the Upper Falls before looping back through a picturesque forest.

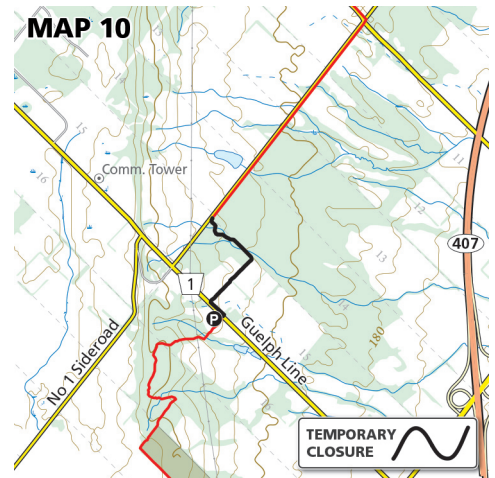
Upper Falls Side Trail: 1.7 km return



IROQUOIA

Map 10 – Guelph Line and No 1 Sideroad, temporary closure

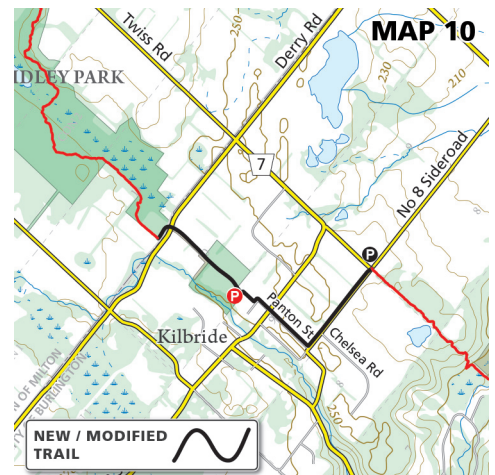
Access to this segment of the Bruce Trail is closed for an unknown duration as a result of construction taking place on the private land. An alternate route to bypass this temporary closure has not been blazed. Please avoid this area for the duration of the closure.



Map 10 – Kilbride Pass reroute

Following the BTC's protection of the 1.5 acre Kilbride Pass property in 2023, the main Bruce Trail has been removed from 2.1 km of busy roads and rerouted to a more natural setting as shown on the map.

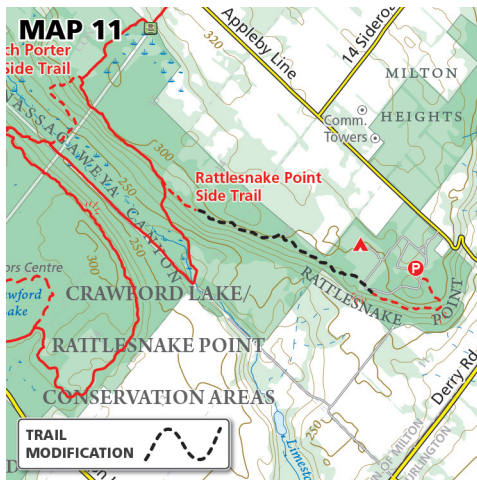
The new route shown in black is 2 km in length. This follows the route of the former Kilbride Side Trail and passes through Kilbride Park and the BTC's Kilbride Pass property.



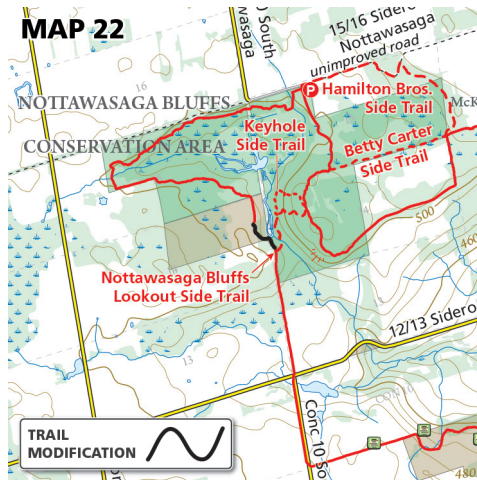
Map 11 – Rattlesnake Point Side Trail

A portion of Rattlesnake Point Side Trail has been moved to an improved route, further from the Escarpment edge.

Rattlesnake Point Side Trail = 2.5 km
(length unchanged)



MAP 22



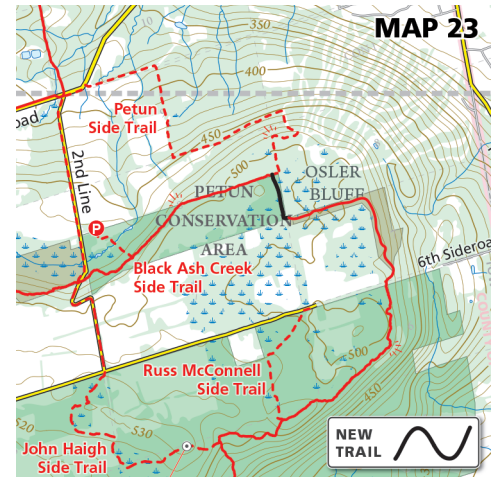
rerouted on the property and removed from private land to the south.

Old route = 270 m
New route = 240 m

Map 23 – Petun Conservation Area

Following the BTC’s securing of Fern Crevice Nature Reserve (2023) and the Osler Bluff Ski Club Easement (2023), a portion of the main Bruce Trail has been rerouted onto permanently preserved land in Petun Conservation Area. As a result of this reroute, the Petun Side Trail has been extended 60 metres, and its

intersection with the main Trail is 60 metres westward from where it was.



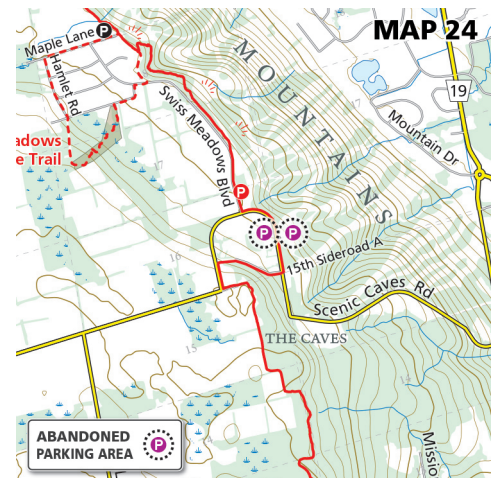
BLUE MOUNTAINS

Map 22 – Salamander’s Bluff, Reroute

Following the Bruce Trail Conservancy’s purchase and securing of MapleCross Nature Reserve at Salamander’s Bluff in 2023, the main Bruce Trail has been

Map 24 – Scenic Caves Road parking

The two Blue Mountain Resort parking locations on Scenic Caves Road denoted on the map are no longer considered reliably accessible and are therefore no longer Bruce Trail Conservancy recommended parking areas.





Dundas Valley Conservation Area - Iroquoia section

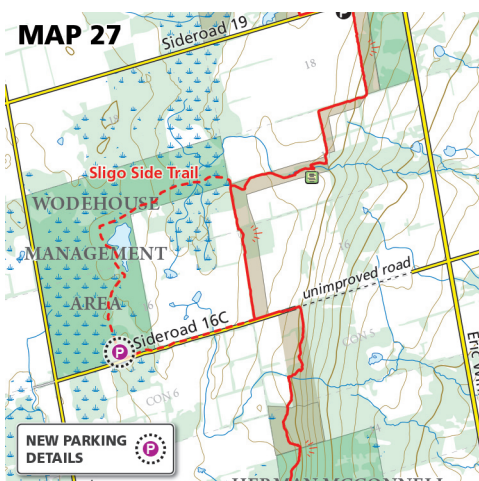
Trail Changes & Notices

BEAVER VALLEY

Map 27 – New parking area at Wodehouse

In a joint venture of the Bruce Trail Conservancy and Grey Sauble Conservation Authority, a new parking area has been created at Wodehouse Management Area, on the north side of Sideroad 16C, 450 metres east of 7th Line. This parking area connects directly with Sligo Side Trail.

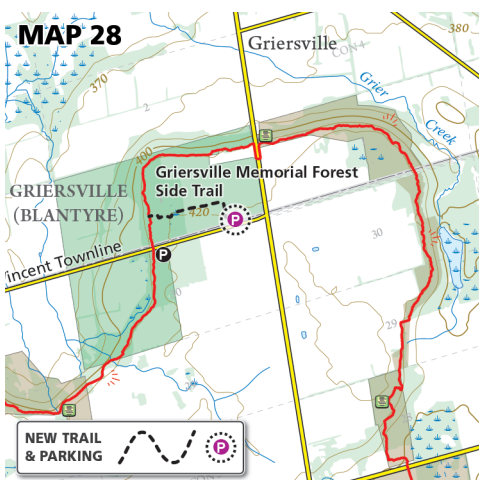
Coordinates: N 44.434922, W 80.577263; Capacity for 10 cars.



Map 28 – Griersville Memorial Side Trail and new parking area

In a joint venture of the Bruce Trail Conservancy and Grey Sauble Conservation Authority, a new parking area has been created at Griersville Memorial Forest, off Euphrasia – St. Vincent Townline, 240 m west of County Road 7. A new Griersville Memorial Forest Side Trail (720 m long) provides access between the new parking area and the main Bruce Trail.

Parking Area Coordinates: N 44.523071°, W 80.571888°; Capacity for 8 cars.

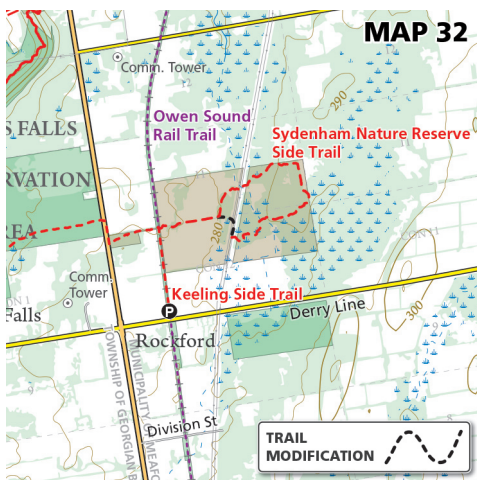


SYDENHAM

Map 32 – Sydenham – Sydenham Nature Reserve Side Trail

The Sydenham Nature Reserve Side Trail has been reconfigured with an improved route, avoiding deep mud and the shoulder of an agricultural field.

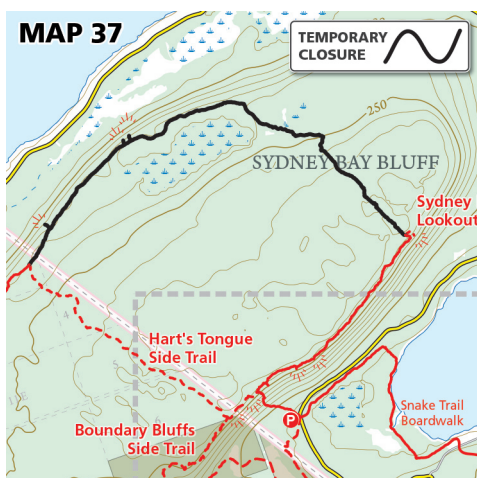
Sydenham Nature Reserve Side Trail = 2.8 km (return)



PENINSULA

Map 37 – Sydney Bay Bluff, Temporary Closure

A segment of the main Bruce Trail between Sydney Bay and Hope Bay has been closed by the landowner for an unforeseen duration as a result of logging operations taking place on the land.



Map 38 – Mshkiki Miikaansing (Medicine Path) Side Trail

A new side trail has been built on the BTC's Palmer property at Barrow Bay: Mshkiki Miikaansing (Medicine Path) Side Trail. This 730 m loop trail was named by Saugeen Ojibway Nation Elder Norma Robson to honour the Indigenous medicinal plants noted on the property during her initial walk. Mshkiki Miikaansing (Medicine Path) Side Trail = 730 m •



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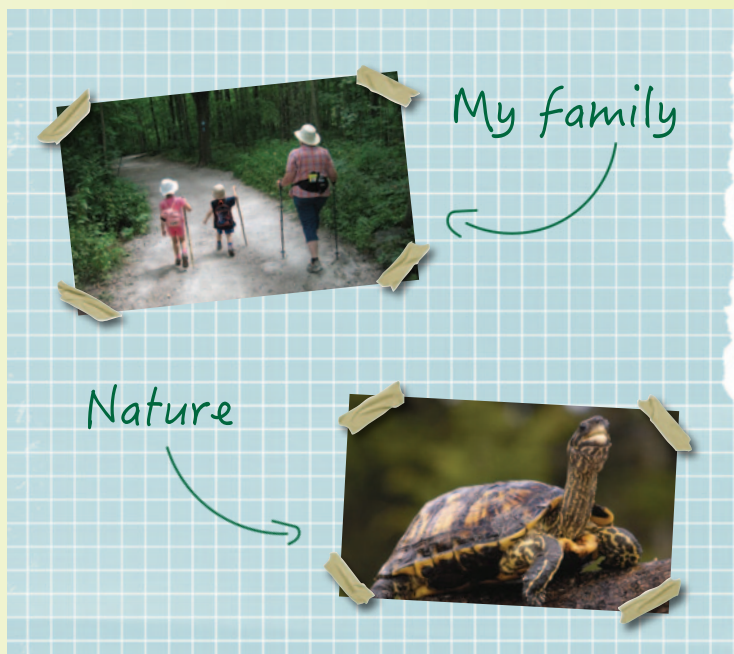
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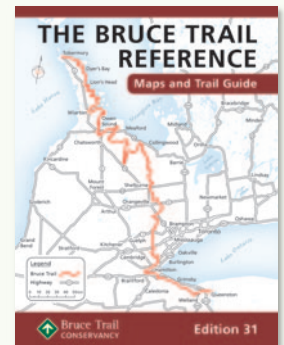


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Members \$22.00, Non-Members \$25.00



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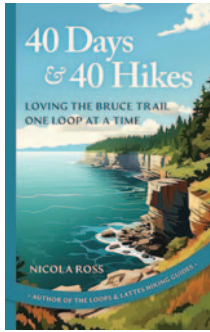
2025 BRUCE TRAIL CONSERVANCY CALENDAR
Featuring original Bruce Trail inspired artwork by various artists. **Members \$15.00 Non-Members \$18.00**

FREE SHIPPING AVAILABLE

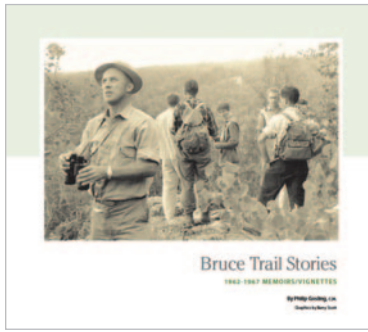
on all orders over \$100 within Canada (over \$150 for US orders; over \$200 for international orders).

BTC BOOKSHELF

To order from our extensive collection of books please call 905-529-6821 or visit brucetrail.org



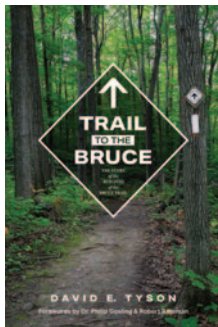
40 DAYS & 40 HIKES
\$26.95



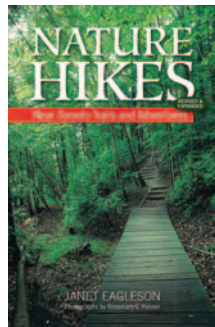
**BRUCE TRAIL STORIES:
1962-1967 MEMOIRS/VIGNETTES**
by BTC Co-founder and Honorary
President, Philip R. Gosling
\$19.95



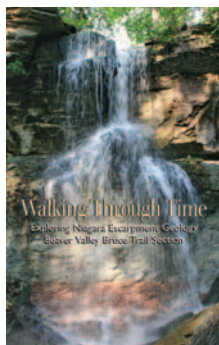
**BUTTERFLIES OF
ONTARIO &
EASTERN CANADA**
\$28.95



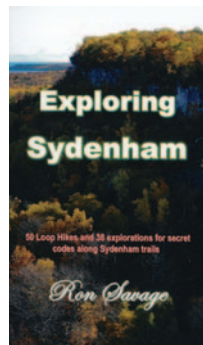
TRAIL TO THE BRUCE
\$63.00



**NATURE HIKES:
NEAR-TORONTO
TRAILS AND
ADVENTURES**
\$24.95



**WALKING
THROUGH TIME**
(Beaver Valley Section)
Members \$25,
Non-Members \$27



**EXPLORING
SYDENHAM**
\$29.95



**WALKING
THROUGH TIME**
(Sydenham Section)
Members \$37,
Non-Members \$42

END-TO-END Badge Package

10 badges. 1 purchase.

End-to-Enders can receive their Bruce Trail End-to-End badge and certificate PLUS each of the nine Club End-to-End badges in one package. Submit your hike logs to the BTC once you've completed the entire Trail and request this package. Those wishing to collect badges as they complete sections will still need to reach out to individual Clubs. The BTC does not sell the Club badges individually. But, if you can wait until the end, you can get all 10 badges at once. Please note: the set includes only the "Hike on Your Own" badges.

\$90.00 *Not available online.*



Learn more about all our badges at brucetrail.org/badges



TRAILS·FILM

world trails film festival

A series of short films celebrating trail stories from around the world.

October 9 at The Rose Theatre, Brampton

October 15 at The Westdale, Hamilton

October 16 at Meaford Hall, Meaford

Join us for an evening of cinematic storytelling that brings to light how trails weave through our lives, ecologies, communities, and more.

Proceeds support the Bruce Trail Conservancy.

Tickets and program details:
brucetrail.org/world-trails-film-festival-2024



Photo: Skogafoss



Photo: Don't Think About Tomorrow



Bruce Trail
CONSERVANCY