

INSIDE: PHOTO CONTEST FINALISTS

VOL. 62, NO.4, FALL 2025

# Bruce Trail

C O N S E R V A N C Y

MAGAZINE

## Friends on the Bruce Trail



## Our Mission

Preserving a ribbon of wilderness, for everyone, forever.



Bruce Trail  
CONSERVANCY

FALL 2025



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- Call 1-800-665-4453, or
- Email [info@brucetrail.org](mailto:info@brucetrail.org)



Cover photo: Two Wrens at Scotsdale Farm, by Greg Noakes

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# Chief Executive Officer's Message

Here is something I believe to be true: nature lovers are great people to spend time with.

They are often warm, curious and caring, which may explain why the Bruce Trail is an amazing community of kindness.

friendships are a special source of joy in my life.

In this issue, you will see strong evidence of the many friendships to be found along the Bruce Trail. Firstly, through our "Friends on the Trail" photo contest we are shown a beautiful window into the connections made on the Trail and how it brings us closer to nature and each other. As you read on, you'll find an article on the partnerships we form with our amazing landowners, who not only help us maintain the continuity of our footpath by generously hosting the Bruce Trail on their lands, but often go the extra mile to support our work. Another feature describes the remarkable symbiotic relationships between some of the Escarpment species that we are working so hard to protect. And in her thoughtful piece, Peninsula Bruce Trail Club president Julie Bennett shares the importance of the long-standing and evolving relationship between the Club and Saugeen Ojibway Nation.

I truly believe that spending time with friends along the Bruce Trail is healing and that we all need more time

in nature. So, as the cooler weather draws nearer and the leaves begin to turn, I encourage you to get out and explore our ribbon of wilderness. Whether you choose to share a special adventure with someone you know or meet new people by joining one of our guided hikes, each trek brings with it the opportunity for friendship.

Wishing you many great hikes with many wonderful friends along our iconic and beloved Bruce Trail. •

Michael McDonald,  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Throughout my life, and especially over the last six years as CEO, I have spent countless hours hiking along the Bruce Trail with hundreds of friends and kindred spirits. I have trekked with volunteers from our nine Bruce Trail Clubs and visitors from our friendship trails around the globe. I have meandered through newly protected areas with donors and dignitaries, partners and members, scholars and staff. I have hiked with people who have been exploring our conservation corridor their whole lives, and with those who are discovering the Bruce Trail for the first time. Each of these hikes has been special and meaningful. In truth, I have made many friends along the Bruce Trail, and those



Photos by: Michael McDonald

### NIAGARA

[niagarabruce trail.club](http://niagarabruce trail.club)

#### Merritthon – November 8, 2025

The Merritthon is a trek of 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](http://iroquoia.on.ca)

#### Iroquoia End-to-End – September 21-22, and 27-28, 2025

Please join us for the Iroquoia Bruce Trail Club annual self-led End-to-End. You can enjoy and complete the 122 km distance over four days (approximately 30-35 km each day). The hikes will traverse the varied terrain from Grimsby in the south 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. Please be honest about your physical abilities. These 4 days are not recommended for new hikers or anyone who hasn't completed these sorts of distances recently. Registration 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 E2E badge (with a NEW design for 2025)! The fee is non-refundable. After costs, the proceeds go to the Iroquoia Bruce Trail Club in support of the Bruce Trail Conservancy mission.

**Content deadline for Blazes for the winter 2025 issue is November 3, 2025.**

Send content to: Laura Tuohy, BTC Manager of Community Engagement, at [ltuohy@bruce trail.org](mailto:ltuohy@bruce trail.org)

#### Steeltown Stomp – October 4, 2025

Interested in a distance and strength challenge? The Steeltown Stomp is just what you've been looking for! Climb up and down approximately 2000 steps of the escarpment stairs, and hike over 20 kilometres in the Iroquoia Bruce Trail Club's annual Steeltown Stomp.

This is a self-guided hike along the Bruce Trail, the Escarpment Rail Trail, and the Chedoke Radial Trail, including the seven sets of Escarpment stairs in Hamilton. Everyone who completes the route and goes through the two checkpoints will earn the coveted Steeltown Stomp badge. A \$35 fee includes checkpoint and finish zone snacks, your badge, and will support the Bruce Trail Conservancy mission.

**Please note:** This is an arduous hike and requires a high level of fitness due to the stair climbing required. This is not a timed event so participants are encouraged to hike at their own pace and enjoy the panoramic views!



Temporary yellow blazes ready to mark the route of the Steeltown Stomp.

Photo: Co Iroquoia Bruce Trail Club

### CALEDON HILLS

[caledonbruce trail.ca](http://caledonbruce trail.ca)

#### Fall Colours Three-Day End-to-End – October 11-13, 2025

Plan to enjoy the spectacular fall colours as you hike 72.4 kilometres of the Main Trail through the famous Caledon Hills section over three days. **Registration is open at [hikes.bruce trail.org](http://hikes.bruce trail.org).** The registration fee of \$75.00 for members and \$90.00 for non-members includes daily bus shuttles and a finisher badge. Light refreshments will be served at checkpoints along the trail. Conquering the hills is hard work but lots of fun, too!

### DUFFERIN HI-LAND

[dufferinbruce trail.club.org](http://dufferinbruce trail.club.org)

#### 25 km Challenge Hike – October 18, 2025

Challenge yourself, your family, friends or anyone, to complete the one-day 25 km hike through the spectacularly serene yet invigorating fields and forests of the Boyne River Valley section of Dufferin Hi-Land. All participants who complete the hike will be awarded our coveted badge. This is a 7-hour allotted "loop" hike that starts and finishes at the Bruce Trail Mulmur Hills Parking Lot on 1st Line East (8:30 am start, 4:00 pm finish). It is a fundraiser hike for our Club and is open to BTC members and non-members; however, this hike is NOT suitable for children under 13 years of age. A refreshing social is planned at the finish. Registration fee is \$45 for members, \$55 for non-members. Register at [hikes.bruce trail.org](http://hikes.bruce trail.org).

**These hikes 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.bruce trail.org](http://hikes.bruce trail.org).**



## BEAVER VALLEY

[beavervalleybrucetrail.org](http://beavervalleybrucetrail.org)

### Beaver Valley Snowshoe Adventure Badge – January 3 & 17, 2026

BVBTC invites you to join us this winter in our beautiful Beaver Valley for the Snowshoe Adventure Badge excursions. Enjoy a sparkling winter afternoon in the snow and, if you haven't experienced the trail on a moonlit evening, now's your chance! We will be leading a moonlight snowshoe hike on January 3, the night of the full moon, so fingers crossed for clear skies! Our daytime snowshoe hike is on January 17.

Visit Club websites for more news, events and hikes.

Participants completing both hikes will receive the Beaver Valley Snowshoe Adventure Badge, affectionately known as the "berserk beaver". Please bring \$10 (members) or \$15 (non members) for the badge to the second outing. Hikes will be posted at [hikes.brucetrail.org](http://hikes.brucetrail.org) on September 20, 2025 and **registration will open October 15, 2025.**



Scarlett Painted Cup, Cape Chin Nature Reserve

Photo: Laurie Browne

## PENINSULA

[pbtc.ca](http://pbtc.ca)



### 2025 Peninsula Hiking Festival – September 19-20, 2025

Camp Celtic, Lion's Head – The theme for the 2025 Festival is "Diversity in Nature." Programming will include a variety of options, including full-day and shorter hikes, guided hikes with experts, and hikes that are longer with less interpretation, as well as non-hiking activities. Participants can look forward to opportunities to explore the unique ecosystems of the Saugeen (Bruce) Peninsula, learn about its diverse flora and fauna, and experience the rich cultural history of the area. Evenings will feature social gatherings, meals, and engaging entertainment.

For more details, visit: [pbtc.ca/2025-peninsula-hiking-festival](http://pbtc.ca/2025-peninsula-hiking-festival)

Dufferin Hi-Land 25 km Challenge 2024

# MEMBERSHIP REFERRAL PROGRAM

## Refer a friend today and you'll both benefit!

Now's a great time to share your love of the Bruce Trail with a friend and encourage them to become a Bruce Trail Conservancy member. When you refer a friend and they join, you'll both get benefits while supporting the future of the Bruce Trail.

Referring is simple:

1. Get your **unique referral code** from your login at [brucetrail.org](http://brucetrail.org)
2. Refer your friends and family and give them your code
3. Receive **benefits** when someone uses your code when they join

Joining members who use a referral code receive a free set of downloadable maps to help them explore the Bruce Trail. And you'll be on your way to earning a Membership Ambassador badge.

Visit [brucetrail.org/membership-referral-program-info/](http://brucetrail.org/membership-referral-program-info/) to get started.



Photo: Mario Miranda

Earn a Membership Ambassador Badge... after you refer 3, 5, and 10 members. Collect all three!



## Where is the Iceberg Capital of the World?

On November 8 it's in Dundas, Ontario.

Adventure Canada and the **Bruce Trail Conservancy** invite you to an Arctic-themed kitchen party like no other. We're bringing the spirit of the North to you—with northern flavours, vibrant art, expedition gear to explore, stories from a special guest who calls the Arctic home, music, and stunning footage from our journeys to the iceberg-laden coasts of Greenland. Think of it as your chance to step into the adventure—without leaving Ontario.

Oh, and if you know where the actual **Iceberg Capital of the World** really is (hint: **Greenland**), come share your answer with us for the chance to win a prize.

**Curious? Come celebrate with us. On Saturday, November 8, 2025 at the Bruce Trail Conservancy headquarters, 101-55 Head St, Dundas, ON.**

[brucetrail.org/adventure-canada-event-2025](http://brucetrail.org/adventure-canada-event-2025)



Adventure  
Canada



SCAN TO  
REGISTER

# Bruce Trail Day - October 5, 2025

Connect with the Bruce Trail at our biggest celebration of the year.

**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.**

This year's theme is "Connections on the Trail". It's a wonderful opportunity for members to introduce friends, family and neighbors 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.

**Bring your friends to one of these Bruce Trail Day 2025 events:**

LOCATION	HOSTED BY
Niagara College, Niagara-on-the-Lake	Niagara Bruce Trail Club
City View Park, Burlington	Iroquoia Bruce Trail Club
Evergreen Brickworks, Toronto	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

For details visit [brucetrail.org/bruce-trail-day-2025](http://brucetrail.org/bruce-trail-day-2025)



Photo: c/o Peninsula Bruce Trail Club

## Available only at Bruce Trail Day Events

### Free Sticker:

Designed by Justin Aubin. See page 10 for more finalists in our Bruce Trail Day Sticker Design Contest.



### Free Bruce Trail Reference Guide:

Available at Bruce Trail Day events while supplies last, thanks to the generous support of the Greenbelt Foundation (1 guide per family).

## Connect to the Greenbelt on Bruce Trail Day

Ontario's Greenbelt turns 20 this year and we're excited to celebrate this milestone on Bruce Trail Day. We're honoured to receive funding from the Greenbelt Foundation in support of Bruce Trail Day 2025, which will help us connect even more people to the Niagara Escarpment, a vital region within the Greenbelt. For more information about the Greenbelt, visit [www.greenbelt.ca/learn](http://www.greenbelt.ca/learn).



## MATCHING OPPORTUNITY

All donations to the Bruce Trail Conservancy on Bruce Trail Day weekend will be matched by a generous anonymous donor and will directly contribute to the future of the Bruce Trail.

*Double your impact with a donation on October 4 or 5 at [brucetrail.org/donate-btday2025](http://brucetrail.org/donate-btday2025).*

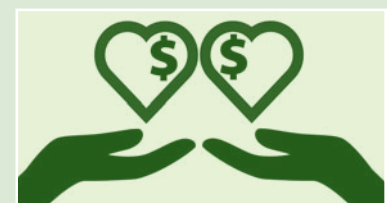




Photo: Craig Adderley

## Connections on the Trail: Bruce Trail Day Sticker Design Contest

This year's Bruce Trail Day Sticker Design Contest highlighted the many ways the Bruce Trail creates connections – to nature, within nature, between people and among communities.

Dozens of creative designs were submitted to this year's contest and we're pleased to announce the grand prize winner and five finalists in these pages.

The winning design will be printed as stickers and given for free to all Bruce Trail Day participants on October 5, 2025. See page 9 to learn where you can pick up your sticker!

### GRAND PRIZE WINNER

**Justin Aubin**

"Last year, my wife and I completed the entire Bruce Trail for the first time.

Along the way, we felt a deep connection — not only to each other, but to our beautiful province and the diverse nature that surrounds us.

When creating a design for 'Connections on the Trail,' I wanted to reflect the ways hikers link with the land, its flora and fauna, and the unique beauty of the Niagara Escarpment. The design represents the many paths, moments, and relationships that fit together to create the larger experience of the trail – a journey built one step, and one connection, at a time."



**FINALISTS**

**Olivia Gaetz**

“I immediately knew that I wanted to highlight the critical, and often unseen, connections within the natural world. The different animals depicted in this sticker are a handful of iconic Ontario critters that live alongside the Bruce Trail... Their interaction within the sticker represents the connections we as humans make through sharing and exploring the Bruce Trail.”



**Fraeya Pinto**

“I wanted to highlight one of my favourite flowers. Monotropa Uniflora, also known as ghost pipe, is a stunning native species. It derives its nutrients from mycelium (mushrooms) as it produces no chlorophyll; this gives it its signature, translucent white coloring. To me, it’s a great symbol of the hidden connections happening right under our feet.”



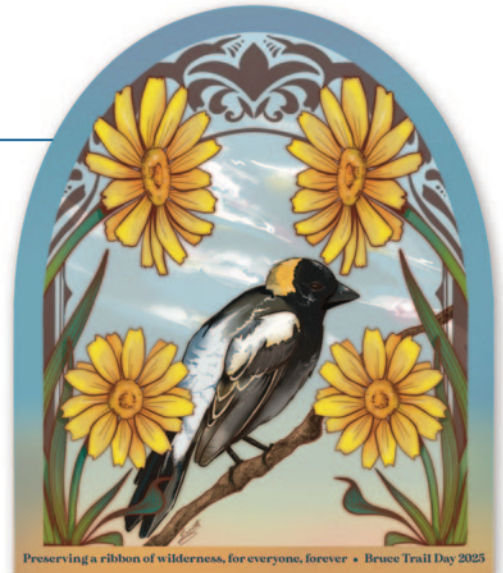
**Leah Watson**

“A Scarlet Tanager and Goldfinch connect on the trail! I love birding on the Bruce Trail so I decided to draw two local birds that I love meeting up on a hike.”



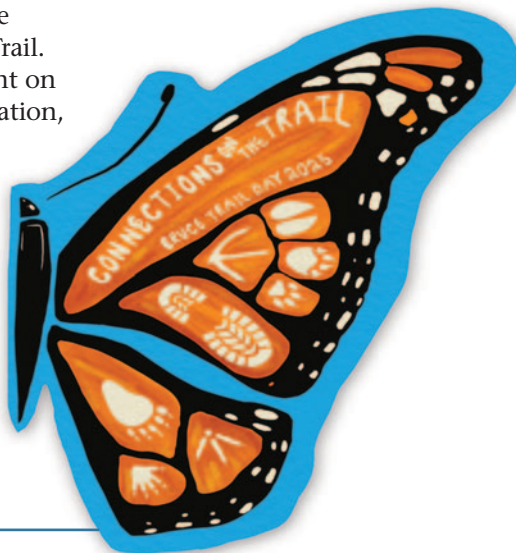
**Ella Eberhardt**

“I wanted to give everyone a window into the region allowing them to take a piece of the Bruce Trail home. This window into nature highlights two species of conservation concern: the lakeside daisy and bobolink.”



**Breanna Rowley**

“This design, shaped like a Monarch butterfly wing, symbolizes the diverse connections found along the Bruce Trail. Monarchs are not only a familiar sight on the trail but also represent transformation, migration, and interdependence – all core ideas behind ‘Connections on the Trail.’ Inside of the wing’s orange panels are simplified footprints of trail users – human hikers, wildlife, and birds – representing how the Bruce Trail is shared and shaped by many. This piece honours how each step we take – whether with boots, paws, or talons – connects us to each other and the land we care for.”



# Conservation in Action: New Protected Areas

The Bruce Trail's conservation corridor has grown with the recent creation of two new nature reserves. One has come about through purchase, the other through donation. Both represent what is possible through the generosity of Bruce Trail Conservancy supporters.

## MapleCross Nature Reserve at Limestone Roost – Toronto section Maps 12/13, near Limehouse 21 acres | 364 metres of Bruce Trail

This new nature reserve is a historic win for nature and for the Bruce Trail experience.

Nestled between two previously secured Bruce Trail Conservancy properties near Limehouse, the creation of MapleCross Nature Reserve at Limestone Roost results in the removal of over 880 metres of road walking from Fifth Line. The Toronto Bruce Trail Club has already completed the reroute, weaving the main Bruce Trail through the nature reserve's forests and wetlands. Sections of the old route have become new side trails, providing additional access between the main Bruce Trail and roadside parking, and creating multiple opportunities for exploration. (See page 34 for trail change details.)

The new section of main Bruce Trail also required the building of a large 11-metre span bridge over Beeney's Creek on the BTC's adjacent Hammer property, and the creation of boardwalks to responsibly cross the floodplain near the bridge. Overall, it has created a wonderful new hiking experience.

The new route allows hikers to explore Limestone Roost's features and habitats including mature pine and maple forests and wetlands, now permanently protected in its 21-acre

expanse. Low profile rock ridges on either side of the Trail inspired the "Limestone" moniker for the property, while "Roost" reflects the multitude of birds species already observed there including Cedar Waxwing, Pine Warbler, and even a few fledging American Crows.

Securing the Bruce Trail on its Optimum Route between Fifth and Sixth Line has taken over two decades of sensitive and persistent efforts by volunteers and BTC staff. With this final 'puzzle piece' in place, an unbroken 3.9 kilometres of Bruce Trail is now permanently protected on BTC-managed land in the area. Special thanks to MapleCross for supporting this nature reserve at Limestone Roost, and for their ongoing support of our mission.

*This nature reserve was made possible with the financial support of:*



Environment and  
Climate Change Canada

Environnement et  
Changement climatique Canada

through the Nature Smart Climate Solutions Fund.

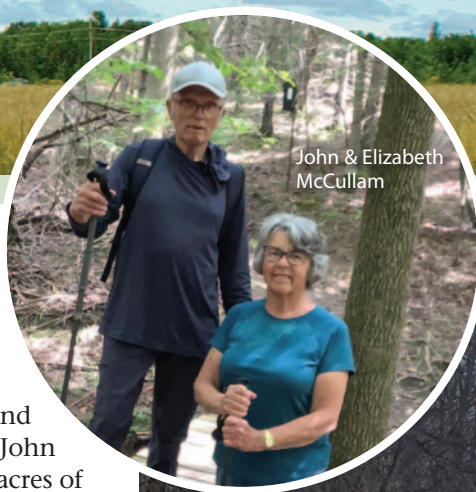


Pine Warbler

Photo: Brian Popellier

Photo: Brooke Henry

MapleCross Nature Reserve at Limestone Roost – Toronto section



John & Elizabeth McCullam

### McCullam Property – Beaver Valley section

Map 24, near Loree

29 acres | 520 metres of Bruce Trail

At the edge of Loree Forest in the Town of Blue Mountains, a remarkable gift is ensuring the preservation of iconic Niagara Escarpment landscape and creating a permanent home for the Bruce Trail. There, John and Elizabeth McCullam have generously donated 29 acres of their beloved property to the Bruce Trail Conservancy.

The property, which is covered in forests of spruce and pine, rises gently to the north. A lovely creek meanders through the woods, creating a ravine that the McCullams have particularly enjoyed exploring in the winter. Tucked between the provincially owned Loree Forest and 21st Sideroad, the McCullam property extends the area of protected land and provides permanent access to the Bruce Trail.

The McCullams moved to the area in the early 1970s and raised their two children, Caitlin and Tom, just a stone's throw from the Bruce Trail. They have graciously hosted the Trail on their property for nearly 40 years, allowing hikers and nature lovers to experience the Trail which itself carries deep importance for the couple.

John and Elizabeth's connection to the Bruce Trail began after moving to the area when they were invited by good friends and Beaver Valley Club members, Bruce and Ruth Calvert, on a hike on the Bruce Peninsula. "That's when our love affair with the Bruce Trail began," remembers John. What started as a hike with friends, blossomed into decades of exploration, and the McCullams became committed supporters of the Bruce Trail Conservancy. Both John and Elizabeth have completed End-to-Ends of the Bruce Trail, are long-term members, and have dedicated years to volunteering with the Beaver Valley Club. John continues to be a Trail Captain on the stretch of Trail through the property.

Being involved with the Bruce Trail Conservancy has been a special part of their lives. "We've really enjoyed the fellowship," says John, "Volunteers of the Beaver Valley Club are a dedicated and social bunch. So many people have given countless hours to the Trail. It's wonderful."

Over the years, the McCullams have witnessed dramatic population growth and development in the area. "The Niagara Escarpment is such a unique feature of Southern Ontario," explains Elizabeth, "It's crucial that all the parts are protected." After decades of hosting the Trail, the McCullams realized they had a unique opportunity to leave a lasting impact. With careful consideration, they decided to donate 29 acres of their property to the Bruce Trail Conservancy, ensuring its long-term protection.

John and Elizabeth emphasize that their primary motivation was to guarantee that the property would be safeguarded forever. "The real driving force was knowing that the property would remain in the hands of the BTC in perpetuity."

For John and Elizabeth, this act of generosity was a commitment to preserving the region's natural beauty while also ensuring that future generations can connect with the land just as they have. "Our hope is that the property will



McCullam Property in Winter – Beaver Valley

Photo: c/o John & Elizabeth McCullam

remain natural," shares Elizabeth, "and that people continue to enjoy it by hiking through it for years to come."

The McCullams' donation is a gift that will continue to give – preserving habitats in the Bruce Trail's conservation corridor and providing a lasting connection to nature along the Niagara Escarpment. •

### Options for Landowners

The Bruce Trail Conservancy can help you plan long-term options for your Niagara Escarpment property. Whether your interest is in conservation, estate planning, or financial and tax benefits, there are a variety of options available that can provide benefits for families and for the future of the Niagara Escarpment. For more information, contact Antoin Diamond, Vice President of Land Securement at 1-800-665-4453 ext. 235, [antoin.diamond@brucetrail.org](mailto:antoin.diamond@brucetrail.org).

Winner: Greg Noakes  
Two Wrens



Every entry we received was evocative in its own way. We saw the joy of discovery on the faces of some of our youngest explorers, learning to love the Trail with careful, practiced steps. We could almost feel the fresh air in our lungs when looking at the triumphant faces of hikers at the top of the Escarpment or the end of a trek. We loved the selfies taken with fellow adventurers and the species encountered along our conservation corridor. We smiled at the group shots that captured the merriment of being together in nature with friends old and new. And our hearts leapt seeing so many pictures of pups on leash and safely enjoying their jaunt!

We truly appreciated every entry and seeing so many faces beaming with joy on the Bruce Trail. As always, it was no easy task to narrow down so many thoughtful entries into a top ten and choose our winners. We saw something special in every single one.

We hope you enjoy Friends on the Bruce Trail!

# BETTER TOGETHER

*Friends on the Bruce Trail* Photo Contest Winners and Finalists

By Ali Schofield

**Happiness. Wonder. Pride. Silliness. Love. These are some of the things you showed us when we put out the call for submissions to our *Friends on the Bruce Trail* photo contest this spring.**



Runner-Up: Hart Fischer  
Wise Owl Advice -  
"Always Follow the Blazes"



Runner-Up: Ruth Moffatt  
Group Hiking Love



Kelly Doner  
Never a dull moment on Trail with  
this amazing hiking partner!



Katie Gardon  
Toddler Hike



Lisa Creighton  
Doe a Deer



Nicole Beier  
Rochelle and Nicole  
taking in one of the  
many stunning views  
along the Bruce Trail

Janet Francis  
Limestone Ladies



Tracey Bennewies  
Up to Snow Good

Karen Couch  
We got this!



# From Handshakes to Habitat Restoration:

## Collaborations with Landowners on the Bruce Trail

By Lyndsey Wilkerson



BTC staff with landowner Christian von der Heide

Photo: Lyndsey Wilkerson

**As hikers, we often marvel at the views, the wildlife, and the serenity of the Bruce Trail. But how often do we pause to consider the people who make that experience possible?**

The Bruce Trail is iconic, weaving through a rich tapestry of forests, wetlands, cliffs, and meadows. It's a cherished path for hikers, naturalists, and outdoor enthusiasts seeking connection with the land. But the Bruce Trail is more than Canada's oldest and longest marked footpath – it's a living corridor of conservation, community, and cooperation.

At the heart of this corridor are over 600 landowners who graciously allow the Bruce Trail to cross their land. These individuals and organizations – some of whom have hosted the Trail for decades – are not just property owners. They are stewards of a shared legacy. As climate change and development pressures mount, the partnerships forged between landowners and the Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC) become ever more

critical, both for the future of the Trail and for Niagara Escarpment ecosystems.

### A Trail Built on Trust

What many don't realize is how much of the Bruce Trail is accessible thanks to the quiet generosity of private landowners. Currently, only 71.9% of the Trail is considered secure, meaning it is protected and publicly accessible through ownership by the BTC or other conservation-minded entities. The remaining sections rely on informal agreements with private landowners, ranging from individuals and families, to farms and large companies.

These landowners voluntarily allow portions of the Trail to pass through their properties, often with nothing more formal than a handshake agreement. These informal arrangements – some



Doug Palmer and Jill Miike with Lyndsey (left)

Photo: Lyndsey Wilkerson



Hart House Farm manager Steve clearing invasive buckthorn

Photo: c/o Caledon Hills Bruce Trail Club

Here we highlight just a few of the landowners who participate in the BTC's Landowner Stewardship Program, illustrating some of the creative ways landowners go the extra mile to support the BTC's mission.

### Doug and Jill – Engaging Restoration Students

Doug Palmer and Jill Miike, landowners in the Niagara section, have been active stewards of their land for decades and have been eagerly learning more about how to enhance their property from an ecological perspective. Their property features a mix of Carolinian forest and open meadow, and is a hub for bird activity, with dozens of migrating and resident bird species using its beautiful natural spaces. To help Doug and Jill gain a better understanding of their land and how to be better stewards of it, the BTC connected them with students from Niagara College's Ecosystem Restoration program. The students analyzed all aspects of the property from vegetation communities, to soils, to hydrology, to species diversity and presented Doug and Jill with recommendations (as well as extra hands for some of the work).

In opening their property in this way, Doug and Jill provided essential hands-on experience for the next generation of ecologists. And in return they have deepened their knowledge of their property and how to care for it in a

enduring for over half a century – are a testament to the power of trust and shared values. Their contribution is often deeply personal, rooted in a love for the land, a desire to share it, and a commitment to preserving it for future generations.

Thanks to the trust and stewardship demonstrated by landowners, the BTC is able to maintain a continuous footpath through areas that would otherwise remain off-limits to the public. Their contribution preserves not just access, but also ecological integrity, as many of these properties shelter rare habitats and species, and help connect "islands of conservation" to create a more continuous conservation corridor.

### Collaboration in Conservation

The generosity of landowners often goes far beyond simply granting access. It offers opportunities for two-way learning and for collaboration in conservation.

BTC volunteers and staff regularly visit landowners to discuss trail maintenance, address concerns, and offer support. At the same time, these visits are opportunities for the BTC to gain insight from landowners into the land's history, ecology, and seasonal rhythms – knowledge that enriches the BTC's understanding of the Escarpment and informs its conservation strategies.

Many landowners also actively manage their properties to support biodiversity, control invasive species, and protect sensitive habitats. Through the BTC's Landowner Stewardship Program they can work closely with BTC volunteers and ecologists to ensure that

their properties contribute to the overall ecological health of a connected conservation corridor along the Bruce Trail.

Ecological stewardship often involves a deep, personal connection to the land and landowners take pride in maintaining their properties in ways that align with conservation goals. This might include planting native species, restoring wetlands, or protecting nesting sites for birds and turtles. Some work closely with BTC ecologists and volunteers to monitor rare species or implement erosion control measures along the Trail.



BTC staff and U of T students ready to work at Hart House Farm

Photo: c/o Caledon Hills Bruce Trail Club

way that supports the wider conservation corridor along the Bruce Trail.

### Christian and Barbara – Fostering Connection

Christian and Barbara von der Heide live beside the BTC's MapleCross Nature Reserve at Cape Chin and, in many ways, are fostering connections between the properties and with the BTC. They've worked with BTC ecologists to improve habitat and species movement by removing redundant fencing between the property lines – literally and figuratively breaking down barriers. They've taken an active role in habitat restoration on their property, planting native Chestnut species and removing invasive plants along the Trail corridor. Christian has also worked with BTC ecologists to monitor species at risk and improve trail infrastructure.

Both Barbara and Christian have become supporters of the Peninsula Club and BTC, offering their unique talents to help connect people to the Niagara Escarpment. For example, Barbara co-leads annual outdoor yoga events at

Cape Chin as fundraisers for the Peninsula Club. And Christian provides his locally made honey and Escarpment-inspired beer from his Paris Brewing Company at many BTC events.

### Hart House Farm – Learning and Working Together

Neighbouring the BTC's Quarryside Nature Reserve in Caledon Hills is Hart House Farm, an outdoor retreat owned by the University of Toronto (U of T). Hart House Farm serves as a space for student engagement, nature experiences, and Indigenous learning, with facilities for day and overnight visitors.

The BTC and Caledon Hills Club have recently partnered with U of T on invasive species removal at Hart House Farm. Through joint events on the property, BTC staff and Club volunteers have lead groups of students in invasive species identification and management while training our own summer Conservation Ambassadors on proper protocols in the field. U of T has generously allowed BTC staff to stay overnight at Hart House Farm to

maximize our time working locally on stewardship projects.

Hart House Farm property manager, Steve, is also the volunteer Land Steward for the BTC's Quarryside Nature Reserve and can regularly be found with his tractor or chainsaw at hand to tackle particularly persistent invasive species like buckthorn.

This reciprocal and cooperative relationship has allowed both the BTC and Hart House Farm to benefit from this partnership and achieve more than either could have done alone.

### A Shared Vision for the Future

In collaborating with the BTC, landowners are truly helping to preserve a ribbon of wilderness. In some cases, landowners who are thinking about the long-term stewardship of their properties have chosen to donate land or conservation easements to the BTC, ensuring that their properties will remain protected in perpetuity. A recent donation from John and Elizabeth McCullam (see page 13 of this issue) is a lovely example of these acts of generosity which are securing the Trail's future and preserving the Niagara Escarpment for future generations.

As the BTC continues its work to protect the Niagara Escarpment and secure a permanent home for the Bruce Trail, the role of landowners will remain central – not just as hosts, but as guardians of the Escarpment's natural and cultural heritage.

Each handshake agreement represents a bridge between private stewardship and public benefit. Each landowner who welcomes the Trail onto their property or works to enhance the native flora and fauna on their land contributes to a legacy of conservation that extends far beyond their own boundaries. Together, these partnerships form the backbone of a trail system that is a recreational treasure and a model for community-based conservation.

In a world where access to nature is increasingly limited, the Bruce Trail stands as a beautiful example of what is possible when land is shared, not fenced off; when conservation is collaborative, not imposed; and when stewardship is a way of life, not just a responsibility. Collaboration with our landowner friends makes this possible. •



For more information on the BTC Landowner Stewardship Program, or to arrange a site visit, contact Lyndsey at [lyndsey.wilkerson@bruce-trail.org](mailto:lyndsey.wilkerson@bruce-trail.org).

Photo: Lyndsey Wilkerson

# What's in Your Pack?

Trail essentials with dog owner Kathrin König

In our ongoing series featuring how Bruce Trail users pack for their adventures, we connected with a devoted Iroquoia Club volunteer and passionate dog owner, Kathrin König.

We hit the Trail with Kathrin and her German Shepherds, Juniper and Jethro, to talk about what she carries while hiking with her furry friends. For Kathrin, a dog owner since 2020, hiking with her pups has added joy and meaning to every outing, but it also requires extra care and preparation.

## Leashes, collars, and identification

For Kathrin, the most important items in her pack are the leashes and collars. Not only is keeping your dog on leash the law in many areas, but it's also essential for safety. "They keep Juniper and Jethro on the Trail and away from cliff edges, poison ivy, and other animals, including other dogs," she says. Kathrin always packs an extra leash in case one breaks. Both dogs also have

identification tags on their collars for peace of mind in case of emergencies.

## Poop bags and a carry-out solution

As a responsible pet owner, Kathrin always picks up after her dogs, so she carries decomposable poop bags and keeps a spare roll in her pack. To avoid carrying the bag for the rest of the hike, Kathrin clips a small waterproof bag to her pack for storage until she finds a garbage bin. "There's nothing worse than when people leave a poop bag hanging from a tree," she says.

## Dog first aid kit

Kathrin carries a basic dog first aid kit that includes tweezers, bandages, gauze, saline solution, and antibiotic wipes. "While you hope you won't need it, you never know what might happen," she explains.

## Water and snacks – for herself and the dogs!

Kathrin always brings extra water for her dogs along with a collapsible bowl. She packs plenty of snacks for both herself and the pups to refuel on longer treks. Snacks can also be helpful for regaining the dogs' attention if they get distracted.



Photo: Brooke Henry

## Tick removal tool and lint roller

Even though Juniper and Jethro are up to date on their tick medication, Kathrin always brings a tick key just in case. After the hike, she runs a lint roller over the dogs' coats before they get in the car to remove any hitchhikers, such as insects or seeds.

## Visibility during hunting season

In the fall, depending on where they're hiking, Kathrin will bring a bright orange vest or bandana for her dogs to wear. This makes them visible to any hunters and others in the area.

## Final tip?

Kathrin's last essential? Hand sanitizer. "Sometimes being a pet owner can be dirty business," she says. Whether cleaning muddy paws, picking up waste, or retrieving mystery items from her dogs' mouths, a bit of sanitizer always comes in handy. •



Photo: Brooke Henry

# Natural Friendships

By Laura Tuohy



Photo: Brian Mitchell @ 1982wildcatfan

White-tailed Deer and Eastern Phoebe

**Within the beautiful biodiversity of the Niagara Escarpment are intricate relationships and unlikely partnerships that reveal how deeply interconnected life can be.**

Symbiosis is a term that describes a close and long-term relationship between two different species. These relationships fall along a spectrum. In mutualism both species appear to benefit. Commensalism occurs when one species benefits while the other is unaffected. And in parasitism, one species benefits at the other's expense. Often it's not easy to draw clear lines between the types – the interactions can be more complex than at first glance.

Countless such relationships are playing out at any time among Escarpment species. For just a glimpse at this complexity let's explore a few extraordinary mutualisms you might encounter on a hike on the Bruce Trail.

## **Eastern Phoebes and White-tailed Deer**

Look carefully when you next come across a White-tailed Deer near the Trail in the fall. If you're lucky, you may spot a small greyish bird, an Eastern Phoebe, 'hitchhiking' on the deer's back or antlers. This flying friend doesn't need a lift, it's

looking for a meal. Fortunately, the deer is more than obliging.

Eastern Phoebes are a type of flycatcher and as the name suggests, much of their diet is insects, plucked from the air, or off plants. Allying with deer provides even more meal opportunities. As the deer walks, it flushes insects from the ground which the phoebe can grab. And the hide of the deer can be home to ticks, lice and biting flies which provide a rich and ready meal. Deer have no easy way of ridding themselves of these parasites so this avian attendant may provide welcome relief.

In this way, these allies benefit from each other. The deer enjoys a reduced parasite load, and the phoebe has access to a reliable food source, especially in the leaner months.

## **Ants and Woodland Plants**

On a spring hike, the beautiful blooms of Bloodroot, Trillium or Trout lily may catch your eye. But did you know that those blooms owe their survival, in part, to ants?



Bloodroot

Bloodroot seeds

Photo: MacIntasha (Naturalist, CC BY-NC)

Photo: Mara McHaffie

Several spring ephemerals have evolved a remarkable relationship with ants in the *Aphaenogaster* genus to help disperse their seeds, a strategy known as myrmecochory. Take a close look at the seeds of a Bloodroot and you'll find the key to this peculiar alliance. Each seed bears a small, whitish attachment – an elaiosome – which attracts ants through chemical signals and is rich in lipids and proteins. Ants carry the seeds to their underground nests. There, the adults or larvae eat the nutritious elaiosome and discard the seed in their refuse area which has just the right conditions for seed germination.

The plants benefit by having their seeds carried away from the parent and tucked below ground in good moisture and nutrient conditions, safe from seed predators and fire. This increases the plant's survival chances and range. Recent evidence also suggests that ants reduce the presence of plant-disease-causing fungi in the soil, again increasing the chances the seed will survive and spout.

For the ants, the benefit appears to be a nutritious (but modest) food reward. The elaiosome does indeed contain useful fats and amino acids, but many seed dispersing ants like *Aphaenogaster* are scavengers that prefer eating dead insects from which they gain more nutrition. Plants take advantage of this by using chemical cues in the elaiosome that mimic dead insects. It appears that elaiosomes are beneficial to ants when insect prey is scarce, but ants are not reliant on them.

### Spotted Salamanders and Algae

Another Escarpment partnership draws us into the microscopic world – the symbiotic relationship between Spotted Salamander and single-celled algae.

Spotted Salamanders (*Ambystoma maculatum*) breed almost exclusively in shallow, fish-free bodies of water including vernal pools, roadside ditches, and even rain-filled tire tracks. These pools are often low in dissolved oxygen – and that is the key to this particular story.

Peer into these shallow pools and you may see clumps of jelly-like eggs with a greenish hue. The green comes from an

alga, a single-celled species called *Oophila amblystomatis* (which means, aptly, “loves salamander eggs”). *Oophila* can invade the membranes of the Spotted Salamander eggs and grow there. While the algae get a safe, moist place to live and a nitrogen-rich home from the embryo's waste, in return they provide oxygen and nutrients to the developing salamander through photosynthesis. This is a boon for both organisms in these oxygen and nutrient-deprived pools.



Spotted Salamander eggs with *Oophila amblystomatis* algae

Photo: Sam O'Connell (Naturalist, CC)

Even more astonishing, in 2010 scientists discovered *Oophila* growing inside the cells of the salamander embryos themselves, not just in the egg jelly as previously thought. How this cell-in-cell symbiosis benefits each partner is still not clear, but researching it holds fascinating potential to help understand how animal cells recognize and deal with foreign bodies.

This amazing relationship may be unique in the world. While algae have been found in similar symbiotic relationships with invertebrates like corals, this is the first (and so far only) known case of a photosynthetic partner living inside a vertebrate.



Spotted Salamander

Photo: Tamara Wilson

### Chicken-fat Mushrooms and Eastern White Pine

On a late-summer hike in a White Pine forest, you might spot the slimy yellow caps of Chicken-fat Mushrooms (*Suillus americanus*). Their presence hints at a profound underground connection.

The Chicken-fat Mushroom is a mycorrhizal fungus. Unlike fungi which decompose dead plant matter or those that cause disease, mycorrhizal fungi grow in close mutualistic association with plant roots. The mushroom caps that we see are just a small outward sign of a vast network of fungal threads (hyphae) that spread throughout the forest floor.

The hyphae of Chicken-fat Mushrooms wrap around the tiny roots of the White Pine like sheaths and the two organisms exchange nutrients, sugars and water. The fungi greatly extends the reach of the pine roots allowing greater access to water, phosphorus and nitrogen from the soil. The pine in return gives the fungus sugars through photosynthesis. Incredibly, the fungal network even connects individual pines, allowing water and nutrients to pass between trees.

This is no casual relationship. Chicken-fat Mushrooms associate exclusively with pines. Meanwhile other mycorrhizal fungi-tree relationships in the forest are more flexible – one fungus may associate with multiple tree species, while some tree species may connect to multiple fungi. And some take it a step further, like the fungi associated with the Escarpment's iconic Eastern White Cedar, whose hyphae actually grow into the Cedar's root cells rather than around them.

There are hundreds of mycorrhizal relationships in an Escarpment forest creating a network that is sometimes called the 'wood wide web'. While scientists continue to untangle the mysteries of mycorrhizae, it does seem clear that there is much more happening underfoot on any given hike than we can imagine.

### Reciprocity and Responsibility

Witnessing these incredible symbiotic relationships on the Bruce Trail, which have evolved over deep evolutionary time, we can't help but be in awe of their intricacy and effectiveness. It can be easy to anthropomorphise their connections as 'friendships' and assume an intention on the part of the participants. But this can oversimplify the reality and blind us to the complexities of their symbioses and the role humans play in them.

Unfortunately, many of these fine-tuned interactions are under threat. The pressures of climate change, habitat fragmentation, and invasive species are disrupting these ancient relationships. Climate change can shift the timing of life cycles, causing once-synchronized partners to miss each other. It can force species to migrate to new regions, disrupting the relationship or creating a new, less stable one. Fragmentation can separate species who are unable to overcome barriers like roads. And invasive species who share a niche with one of the partners, but don't have the same mutualistic connections, can take over habitats and break the ties.

This is why conservation efforts matter. When we protect habitats along the Bruce Trail, we're not just preserving scenery, we're safeguarding intricate, often invisible partnerships. As we marvel at these amazing associations, we are reminded that humans are part of this reciprocal web of life and our role as partners is one that carries responsibility. As Potawatami botanist and author Dr. Robin Wall Kimmerer writes, "Each person, human or no, is bound to every other in a reciprocal relationship ... All flourishing is mutual." These ideas – reciprocity and responsibility – are deeply rooted in the worldviews of many Indigenous nations and are valuable concepts for us all to adopt.

In supporting the Bruce Trail Conservancy, we are protecting Niagara Escarpment habitats and the complex symbiotic relationships they hold. We are each part of a community that shares responsibility for nurturing the delicate connections in nature. May you have a chance to encounter, and feel a part of, these marvelous interconnections on your next hike. •



Chicken-fat Mushroom under White Pine

Photo: Wikey Homestead (iNaturalist, CC)

# The Challenge Continues: Trail Development & Maintenance Endowment Fund Growing

**Hundreds of donors have helped us meet a matching donation challenge and raise \$1 million towards Trail development and maintenance. Now anonymous donors have committed additional funds to continue this challenge, increasing our collective impact on the future of the Bruce Trail.**

In 2024, the Bruce Trail Conservancy launched the *Trail Development & Maintenance Endowment Fund 1182 & 1183* to secure lasting funding for ongoing maintenance of the Trail and the structures along it, today and into the future.

As a rugged footpath that weathers all seasons, the Bruce Trail will always require repairs, reroutes, and new structures to keep it safe and accessible. This endowment ensures that funds will be available for these essential activities for years to come. The invested fund will grow over time, with annual returns used to support ongoing maintenance activities.

Two generous anonymous donors, one of whom has hiked the Bruce Trail end-to-end, initially offered to match donations to the fund dollar for dollar up to \$500,000, allowing it to thrive. Since then, contributions from Bruce Trail Clubs and individual donors, together with proceeds from events like the silent auction and Hike-a-thon, have allowed the BTC to meet this match and reach the initial \$1 million goal.

Encouraged by this enthusiasm, the anonymous donors have now increased their commitment and will match up to an additional \$500,000. This will bring the total fund value up to \$2 million, creating a lasting impact on Trail

sustainability. The Bruce Trail Conservancy looks forward to rising to this challenge and invites supporters to help meet this exciting goal over the next five years.

**You can contribute to this fund anytime** on the Bruce Trail Conservancy website ([brucetrail.org/donate-tdm-endow](http://brucetrail.org/donate-tdm-endow)) or by phone. You can also participate in one of the events, like Bruce Trail Day or the Bruce Trail Hike-a-thon, which specifically support this fund. **All donations will be matched until the fund hits \$2 million.** •



Photo: Lilla Fodor

## Bruce Trail Hike-a-thon 2025: Setting new records

**This May, 86 hikers took to the Bruce Trail in support of trail development and maintenance. Teams and solo Hike-a-thoners together raised over \$41,500 – the highest total in Bruce Trail Hike-a-thon history!**

And, thanks to our generous donors who matched these gifts, this year's Hike-a-thon's total impact was over \$83,000 towards the *Trail Development and Maintenance Endowment Fund 1182 & 1183*.

Heartfelt thanks to all this year's Hike-a-thon participants who not only challenged themselves to reach hiking goals, but also spread the word about the BTC and reached out to family and

friends to encourage donations. Our gratitude also goes to those who donated prizes to help motivate and recognize Hike-a-thoners, including: Blue Mountain Resort, Hockley Valley Resort, Adamo Winery, and each Bruce Trail Club.

Not able to participate in this year's Hike-a-thon? Good news: the Hike-a-thon will be back in spring 2026! Stay tuned for more details in the coming months. •



Photo: Carol Pegelo

# Working Together: Peninsula Bruce Trail Club and Saugeen Ojibway Nation

By Julie Bennett, PBTC President

Ginebek Miikaans (Snake Trail Boardwalk) in Neyaashiinigiimiing at Cape Croker Park

Photo: Rhannon Carruthers

**Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SON) Traditional Territory encompasses five sections of the Bruce Trail with the Peninsula section being the most northerly. The relationship between SON and the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club (PBTC) is a long-standing and evolving one.**

I'm often asked about how this relationship came to be and if PBTC has any advice on building a respectful relationship with First Nations and Indigenous people in their respective communities. Though I am still learning myself, I can point to the intentions, commitments and actions of those who have come before me, and to where our Club and SON are on our journey today.

As I am new in the role of President of PBTC, I rely heavily on the efforts of those who came before me, most recently our Past President Tamara Wilson and the members of the PBTC Board, especially First Nations and Indigenous Relations

Advisor Janna Chegahno and the former Outreach/Membership Director Marg Glendon. I hope to continue on this path of building the relationship and learning to walk together.

## The Bruce Trail at Neyaashiinigiimiing

Twenty kilometres of Bruce Trail pass through Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation at Neyaashiinigiimiing. (Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation together with Saugeen First Nation form the Saugeen Ojibway Nation.) Though the entire Bruce Trail is on Traditional and Treaty Territories of several Indigenous nations, this is the only place where the Bruce Trail is hosted on a First Nation Reserve.

This passage of the Bruce Trail through Neyaashiinigiimiing, which has existed since the Bruce Trail was first built, has put the Peninsula Club in a unique position among Bruce Trail Clubs with respect to relationships with First Nations.

We have the opportunity and responsibility to honour this shared history, and work, learn and grow together.

## Collaboration from Trail building to leadership

From the earliest days of the Bruce Trail, the PBTC valued its relationship with SON and achieved considerable progress through SON support. In the early 1960s, SON members led by John Nadjiwon were instrumental in cutting and blazing kilometres of the Trail through Neyaashiinigiimiing (then known as Cape Croker).

Decades later, one of the most notable collaborations between SON and PBTC took shape: Ginebek Miikaans (Snake Trail Boardwalk) in Neyaashiinigiimiing at Cape Croker Park. This 900m wetland-traversing boardwalk is an integral part of the Bruce Trail that allows an up-close opportunity to sustainably view diverse wetland flora and fauna.

In recent years and throughout Tamara Wilson's tenure as Club President, she and Marg Glendon



John Nadjiwon

Photo: BTC Archives



Hikers from SON Environmental Office and PBTC sharing a hike this August.

Photo: Julie Bennett

worked on community building and the relationship with SON. In 2021, the Club welcomed the first SON Board Member: Janna Chegahno. PBTC created a new Board Position, named with Janna's input: "First Nation and Indigenous Relations Advisor." Today, in 2025, PBTC is honoured to have two SON Members on the PBTC Board: Janna Chegahno and Caley Doran.



Caley Doran and Julie Bennett presenting at the World Trails Conference

Photo: Union Eleven Photography

### Demonstrating the relationship at the World Trails Conference

Caley Doran and I first met many years ago, while doing the Hike Ontario Hike Leaders course. We have hiked together, worked together at the Annual Neyaashiinigiing Pow Wow, became members of the PBTC Board at the same time, and in October 2024 had the honour of presenting together at the World Trails Conference in Ottawa.

At the World Trails Conference we spoke about the relationship between SON and PBTC. Caley and I prepared this presentation, with considerable input from Tamara, Janna and Marg. Caley and I drove eight hours from the Peninsula to Ottawa together, so we had a lot of time to reflect and discuss our presentation.

We agreed we did not want to be "talking heads" in the front of the conference room, but rather be an analogy for the relationship between SON and PBTC, represented by our friendship as it has evolved over many years. We believed our presentation demonstrated that while we come from diverse backgrounds, we have a great deal in common and are both fiercely protective and proud of this ribbon of wilderness.

### Lessons learned on the journey so far

Below is a summary of what Caley and I shared at the World Trails Conference.

We have learned that like all relationships, the relationship between SON and PBTC requires trust, respect and patience. Self-education, self-awareness and humility are important, and communication is paramount. The relationship is an ongoing process which is strengthened over time as we continue to work together.

Building a relationship with First Nations and Indigenous people involves listening and learning together. To support this, PBTC leaders together with SON Elders, Knowledge Keepers and advocates developed thoughtful progress related to:

- Communicating and relationship-building – especially relating to the land
- Connecting with community leaders
- Understanding what is important to one another
- Developing a pattern of being open to learning
- Supporting in ways that are relevant and meaningful
- Learning and using appropriate protocols
- Learning the importance of reciprocity in relationships

One of the ways PBTC learns, listens and supports is by participating in SON community events, such as:

- Christmas Market at Kikendaasogaming Elementary School
- Neyaashiinigiing Annual Pow Wow
- SON Scone Festival

And collaborating with SON on projects, such as:

- Communicating ongoing PBTC activities through local Chippewas of Nawash newsletter and social media



PBTC Past President Tamara Wilson at 2025 Neyaashiinigiing Pow Wow

Photo: c/o Julie Bennett

*"I liken the relationship between SON and PBTC as an evolving friendship – a valuable relationship that adds richness and meaning, offering support, joy, and a sense of belonging."*

- Tree planting
- National Day for Truth and Reconciliation hikes
- Two-eyed seeing hikes
- Joint birding initiatives (e.g. bird box building, Owl Prowl)
- Re-naming side trails to recognize our collaboration

PBTC continues to support people and culture by including First Nations and Indigenous teachings in our events, such as:

- Peninsula Hiking Festival
- Bruce Trail Day at Cape Croker Park
- Annual Club Board Meeting at the Pavilion at Cape Croker Park

I liken the relationship between SON and PBTC as an evolving friendship – a valuable relationship that adds richness and meaning, offering support, joy, and a sense of belonging. PBTC is extremely grateful to SON for the opportunity to work, grow and learn together so that we can help protect this ribbon of wilderness, for everyone, forever. •

*The Peninsula Bruce Trail Club acknowledges and honours 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.*

*Did you know – SON's Land Acknowledgement was a gift to the PBTC? This was a significant gesture from SON. It became one of the first Land Acknowledgements on the Saugeen (Bruce) Peninsula and has been subsequently requested and used by other local organizations.*



Photo: Mansfield Outdoor Centre

# Explore Like a Local

## Our series continues with recommendations from volunteers in the Sydenham and Dufferin Hi-Land Bruce Trail Clubs.

If you're planning a hike in the Sydenham or Dufferin Hi-Land sections of the Bruce Trail to take in the autumn colours, consider stopping at one of these small businesses beloved by local volunteers before or after your trek.

### SYDENHAM BRUCE TRAIL CLUB RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Suntrail Source for Adventure

100 Spencer St, Hepworth  
*Recommended by Mike M., SBTC Director at Large*

Mike calls this independently owned store a "one-stop shop" for outdoor gear to help you enjoy and explore nature year-round. Located just minutes from the Bruce Trail, Mike appreciates their friendly, knowledgeable staff, who are always available and attentive. He says, "Suntrail offers a great selection of hiking gear, including boots, poles, snowshoes, rain gear, and clothing to meet your needs from head to toe!" As a bonus, for over 30 years, Suntrail has

offered a 10% discount to BTC members on regular-priced merchandise.

#### Ginger Press Bookshop and Coffee Bar

848 2nd Ave E, Owen Sound  
*Recommended by Marie K., SBTC Membership & Volunteer Coordinator*  
 This long-standing bookstore carries a wide selection of books, all of which have a connection to Owen Sound and Grey Bruce County. Marie appreciates that Ginger Press has also published over 150 books by local writers. They carry many books related to the Bruce Trail and Niagara Escarpment, including those by Ron Savage, Beth Gilhespy, Joe Johnson, and even the Bruce Trail Reference Guide. While you browse their selection, you can also enjoy a hot cup of coffee or pastry.

#### Rockford Family Restaurant

317757 Highway 6 & 10, Rockford  
*Recommended by Ron S., SBTC Trail Director*  
 Ron recommends this small local gem because it offers excellent food and

friendly service. Ron's favourite breakfast item is the scrumptious Veg and Cheese Scrambler, which he says is "unbelievable". For supper, Ron would opt for one of the eight delicious schnitzel plates. Hours may vary – check online to plan ahead.



## DUFFERIN HI-LAND BRUCE TRAIL CLUB RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Mono Cliffs Inn**

367006 Mono Centre Rd, Mono

*Recommended by Jill J., DHBTC Director at Large*

Jill recommends this historic inn, calling it "a coveted treasure, steps from the Bruce Trail and Mono Cliffs Provincial Park." At "The Cliffs", you can enjoy a casual lunch or retreat to Peter Cellars Pub for a cozy meal surrounded by old stone walls. In the summer, Jill enjoys sitting on the patio, canopied by "Old Maggie", the Magnolia. "Whether it's cocktails and appetizers, burgers and beer, or lamb chops and wine," Jill says, "it's all delicious."

### **Mono Centre Brewing Company**

388113 Mono Centre Rd, Mono

*Recommended by Stephen C., DHBTC Board Member and Community Events Coordinator*

This family-run micro brewery is set against the backdrop of Mono Cliffs Provincial Park. Stephen appreciates this rustic brewery for its welcoming, neighbourly feel, which includes communal tables, fire-pits, and lawn games. Stephen finds it hard to choose between the 15 rotating taps, which include crisp lagers, hop-forward IPAs, malty browns, and a decadent coffee stout. The brewery also offers snacks such as pretzels, hot dogs, and craft pizza for those who are feeling peckish.



Photo: c/o Dufferin Hi-Land Club

### **Mansfield Outdoor Centre**

937365 Airport Road, Mulmur

*Recommended by John D., DHBTC Past President*

John recommends this spot for those looking to stay in the area, as it has rustic cabins and shared rooms at very reasonable prices, perfect for multiday hikers. John enjoys dining at the onsite restaurant, the Pine River Café & Public House, and praises their selection of local wines and beers. The Centre is a short 10-minute drive to the Bruce Trail.

And the property itself has a number of trails connected to the Dufferin County Forest, making it great for hikers looking to partake in other outdoor activities, such as biking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing.

### **LOTS TO DISCOVER**

We hope you have a chance to enjoy these local Niagara Escarpment establishments, and the many others dotted along the Bruce Trail that are ready to discover.

Please note that these are recommendations based on the experiences of our volunteers, who did not receive anything in exchange for this listing. They are not official endorsements from the Bruce Trail Conservancy, nor paid advertisements from the businesses.

Think of this like printed word-of-mouth from your fellow hikers. Enjoy exploring like a local! •



Photo: Mono Centre Brewing Co.

# LANDMARK GRANT:

## The Weston Family Foundation deepens its commitment

**The Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC) is excited to announce that the Weston Family Foundation has committed to supporting the mission of the BTC with a grant of more than \$5.5 million over three years.**

Funds will directly contribute to protecting ecosystems across the Niagara Escarpment and engaging local communities to explore the Bruce Trail and deepen their connection with nature. The impact of this grant will be significant, helping to accelerate our efforts across three key pillars of our work.

### LAND SECUREMENT:

**Permanent preservation of over 500 hectares of land, and securement of 14 kilometres of the Bruce Trail.**

The land opportunities identified for support through this grant are unique for their ecological significance, with features including: critical habitat for species of conservation concern; capacity to sequester and store carbon (key habitat types include wetlands, grassland and/or forest); and areas under threat of development.

### LAND STEWARDSHIP:

**Land stewardship plans for each of the secured properties.**

BTC ecologists will conduct three-season inventories on each newly secured property to collect data on habitat types, plant and animal species (including breeding birds and species at risk), and threats to the health of the land. From this information, corresponding workplans will be created to steward each of the new properties according to their unique needs and characteristics. BTC volunteers will be integral to ensuring the work plans are completed.

**Initiation of restoration projects.**

Based on land stewardship assessments, habitat restoration projects may include meadow creation, reforestation, invasives species management, soil health and erosion mitigation techniques, and watershed management.

### BRUCE TRAIL IN YOUR COMMUNITY:

**Dedicated resources to inspire more people to explore, experience and appreciate the Niagara Escarpment.** Programming supported by this grant will include: hosting on-trail events to welcome local community members; engaging with local municipality decision-makers to share the positive impacts the Bruce Trail is having in their communities; building greater connections with local landowners; and communicating and sharing the impacts of this outreach within our community of supporters.

The Weston Family Foundation's generous grant represents an outstanding commitment to our conservation corridor and furthers our relationship which most recently included contributions to our tallgrass prairie and meadow restorations across the Dufferin Hi-Land, Beaver Valley and the Blue Mountains Club sections. This Weston Family Foundation grant will also unlock matching support from other committed funders, such as Environment and Climate Change Canada's matching grant and the \$60 Million Challenge funding.

We are filled with gratitude to be working with the Weston Family Foundation to advance our mission and inspire more people in the community to explore the wonders of the Niagara Escarpment on the Bruce Trail. •

*"As one of Ontario's largest land trusts, the Bruce Trail Conservancy is a vital and trusted partner in conservation, restoration, and management of land along the Niagara Escarpment UNESCO World Biosphere. The Weston Family Foundation is proud to support the Bruce Trail Conservancy in protecting these ecosystems for all to enjoy."*

**Garfield Mitchell, Chair,  
Weston Family Foundation**



Meadow restoration at Dunedin Ravine Nature Reserve supported by Weston Family Foundation.

Photo: Brian Popelier

# Planned Giving: It's never too early

## Every fall, Dimitri takes some time to disconnect from his devices and head out to the Bruce Peninsula to surround himself with the serenity of the Niagara Escarpment.

This annual event began 12 years ago when a planned camping trip to Cypress Lake with friends turned into a solo adventure due to a rainy weather forecast.

"I was still in college then, spending a lot of time on my computer and in classrooms," said Dimitri. "My decision to head up to the Peninsula despite my friends' change of heart turned into one of the most relaxing experiences I'd had in a long time. It's a trip I look forward to now every year."

During his childhood, Dimitri lived in a couple of urban cities before moving with his family to Vaughan, and eventually Oak Ridges. His experience living in a quieter neighbourhood near the Jefferson Forest and around the corner from a lake, left an indelible appreciation for the outdoors. Being able to access the natural world and escape that busy city feeling only a short distance away inspired his desire to ensure others could experience that too.

"The Bruce Trail is so huge, that at least one section is easily accessible from anywhere in south central Ontario," noted Dimitri. "The added benefit of spending time outdoors and surrounded by nature is that it's made me more inclined to take care of it. I'm aware, for instance, that I'm able to enjoy the Niagara Escarpment today because others before me supported the effort to secure the Bruce Trail permanently and make it available for everyone. I want this to continue, and I want to contribute."

While considered young at 32, Dimitri has known for a long time that he wanted to include charities in his will. He likens the act of gifting his lifetime assets to charities with the idea of dreaming about all the good you could do if you won the lottery. The Bruce Trail Conservancy is one of many charities he has included as a beneficiary of his estate.

The deciding factors for including a charity in a will are unique to everyone. For Dimitri, choosing charities that impacted his life; are servicing causes important to him; are fiscally responsible; and are within Canada, helped him to narrow down his list. From there, he decided to assign a percentage of his estate to each charity.

"Particularly because of my age, I felt it made sense to take the percentage approach," said Dimitri. "I can't predict

what my estate will look like in the future, other than I expect it to grow. This way, the gifts will grow with me over time. I'm young, but I'm hoping in the future it will be a good amount.

"Leaving a gift in my will to the Bruce Trail Conservancy feels good. It means I've officially locked into a promise I made to myself years ago. My family and friends are aware of my charitable intentions, and it's my hope that they might consider it, too." •

*Like Dimitri, you can create a forever gift that makes an impact on future generations. To learn how creating a Will is now easier than ever, visit [brucetrail.org/epilogue-wills](http://brucetrail.org/epilogue-wills). For any questions contact Gloria Vidovich at [gloria.vidovich@brucetrail.org](mailto:gloria.vidovich@brucetrail.org)*



*"I'm able to enjoy the Niagara Escarpment today because others before me supported the effort to secure the Bruce Trail permanently and make it available for everyone. I want this to continue, and I want to contribute."*

# Donating Securities: Simple and Valuable

**Christine shares what motivated her to support the Bruce Trail Conservancy with donations of securities:**

*“My late father-in-law once told me to ‘buy land, they’re not making any more of it.’ It stuck with me. So, when I donate to my favourite charitable organization, the BTC, I always direct my gift to land acquisition.*”

“By chance, I noticed on the Bruce Trail Conservancy website that one could donate securities. What is that all about, I wondered. Turns out I can donate securities that have gone up in value, which is really easy, and get a tax receipt for the full value of the shares, without paying income tax on the gain. Sounds too good to be true, but it really is a simple and valuable way to donate.

“So now I donate some securities every year, and enjoy not only the tax benefit, but the rosy feeling that I am helping to preserve a ribbon of wilderness, for everyone, forever.”

*Learn more about donating securities at [brucetrail.org/ways-to-give/#Gifts-of-Securities](https://brucetrail.org/ways-to-give/#Gifts-of-Securities)*



*Qeqertarsuaq on the south coast of Disko Island, Western Greenland.*

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# Trail Changes & Notices

JUNE – AUGUST 2025, POST EDITION 31

FOR THE LATEST TRAIL CHANGE AND NOTICES, VISIT [BRUCETRAIL.ORG/TRAIL\\_CHANGES](http://BRUCETRAIL.ORG/TRAIL_CHANGES)

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

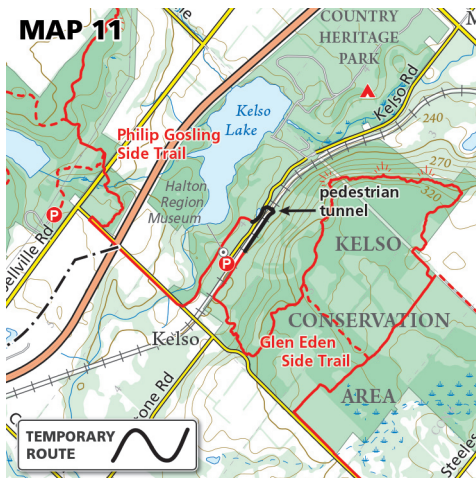
Visit [brucetrail.org/trail\\_changes](http://brucetrail.org/trail_changes) for the latest changes, searchable by Map Number, Club Section, and even by text in the description.

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

## IROQUOIA

### Map 11 – Railway crossing at Kelso Conservation Area

The pedestrian bridge over the railway line at Kelso Conservation Area's parking lot is closed due to construction. A temporary reroute takes hikers through the pedestrian tunnel found at the East Lodge of Glen Eden Ski & Snowboard Centre. The displayed reroute is 530 metres in length. Closure is estimated to last until September 30, 2025.



## TORONTO

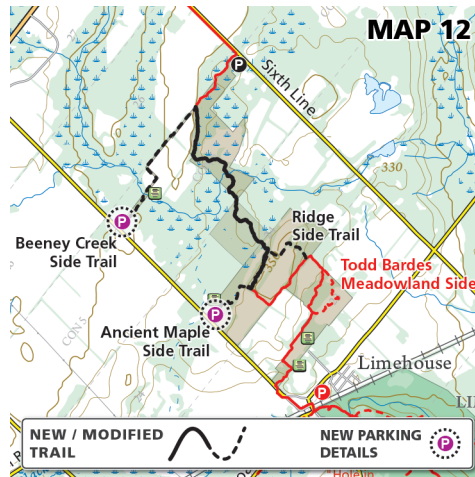
### Map 12 – Toronto – New routes in Limehouse area

Following the successful securing by the BTC of MapleCross Nature Reserve at Limestone Roost this spring, the Toronto Bruce Trail Club has removed close to 900 m of Bruce Trail from Fifth Line in the Limehouse area. The main Bruce Trail has been rerouted to a natural environment, and sections of the old route have become new side trails, providing additional access between the main Bruce Trail and roadside parking.

**Length of the newly routed main Bruce Trail (in solid black on the map) = 1.5 km**

**Beeney Creek Side Trail = 1.1 km**

This access trail connects the main Bruce Trail and



Fifth Line through a narrow, protected corridor on the BTC's Sinclair property (secured in 1995).

**New Roadside Parking Fifth Line at Beeney Creek Side Trail:** Capacity: 5  
Coordinates: 43.648028, -79.995285

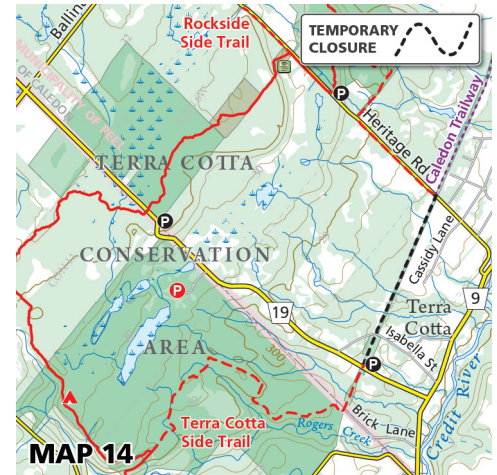
**Ancient Maple Side Trail = 450 metres**  
This access trail connects the Main Trail and Fifth Line, passing a number of old growth maples, on the BTC's Maple Ridge Nature Reserve (secured 2018).

**New Roadside Parking Fifth Line at Ancient Maple Side Trail:** Capacity: 5  
Coordinates: 43.642394, -79.987737

**Ridge Side Trail = 430 metres**  
Some of the original route of Ridge Side Trail is now main Bruce Trail. The remaining 430 metres of Ridge Side Trail creates a 1.2 km loop with the main Bruce Trail on the BTC's Maple Ridge Nature Reserve.

### Map 14 – Toronto – Terra Cotta Side Trail, temporary closure

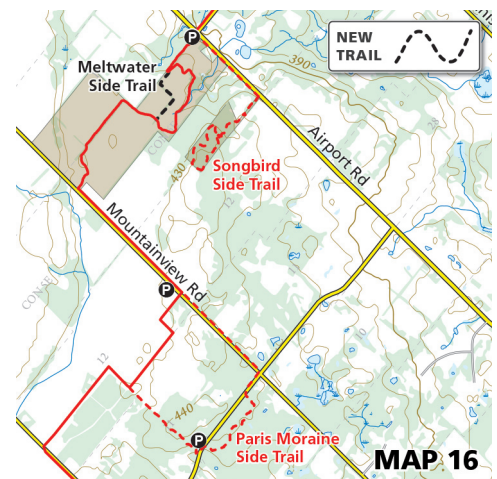
A portion of the Terra Cotta Side Trail (Caledon Railway) between Winston Churchill Blvd and Heritage Rd is temporarily closed due to a culvert replacement. The anticipated completion date is October 31, 2025.



## CALEDON HILLS

### Map 16 – Caledon Hills – Meltwater Side Trail

The Caledon Hills Bruce Trail Club has created a new side trail on the BTC's Meltwater Moraine protected natural area (secured earlier this year). The Meltwater Side Trail is a 420 metre trail that creates a 1.3 km loop with the main Bruce Trail through the northeastern part of the property.



### Map 19 – Caledon Hills – Third Outlier Side Trail

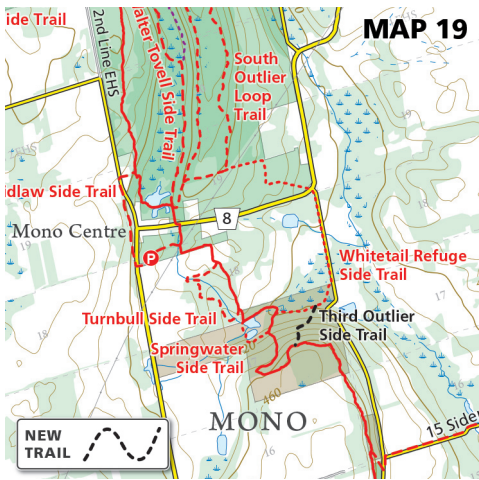
A new side trail has been blazed on the BTC's Whitetail Refuge Nature Reserve (secured in 2022). Third Outlier Side Trail is a 390 metre trail connecting the main Bruce Trail and the Whitetail Refuge Side Trail, creating a 1.6 km loop, and traversing the face of a unique geological formation – an outlier.

Near the village of Mono Centre, there are three outliers – large “islands” of Escarpment rock, separated from the main Escarpment edge. Two of them are

located within Mono Cliffs Provincial Park. The third one is partly contained within the BTC's Whitetail Refuge Nature Reserve.

Leaving the main Bruce Trail, this side trail descends through a gap in the Escarpment edge and cuts diagonally across the north face of the third outlier. Colonies of Walking Fern can be seen on top of some of the large boulders near the beginning of the trail. After 390 m, it intersects the Whitetail Refuge Side Trail.

The upper portion of the Third Outlier Side Trail is of above-average technical difficulty; hikers should watch carefully for crevices among the boulders.



## DUFFERIN HI-LAND

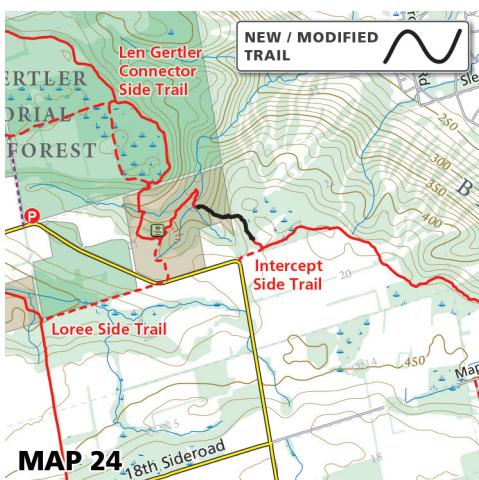
### Map 19 – Dufferin Hi-Land – Carriage Side Trail, Temporary Closure – LIFTED

The temporary closure first reported in December 2024 has been lifted and the entire Carriage Side Trail is now open in Mono Cliffs Provincial Park.

## BEAVER VALLEY

### Map 24 – Beaver Valley – Reroute near Alpine Ski Club and BTC Wood Property

To create a less steep route and improved

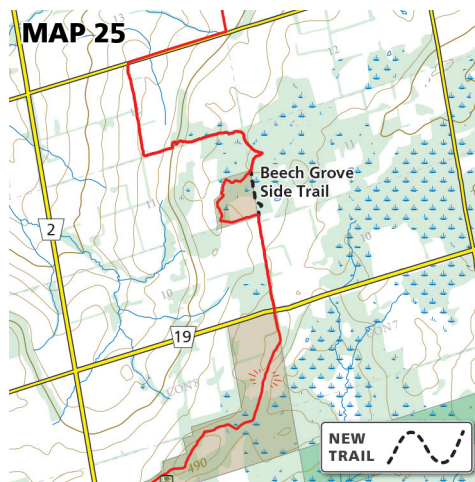


hiking experience, Beaver Valley Bruce Trail Club volunteers have rerouted a short section of the main Bruce Trail between the Intercept Side Trail in the Alpine Ski Club area, and into the Bruce Trail Conservancy's Wood property. The new route is only 20 metres longer than the old route.

### Map 25 – Beaver Valley – Beech Grove Side Trail

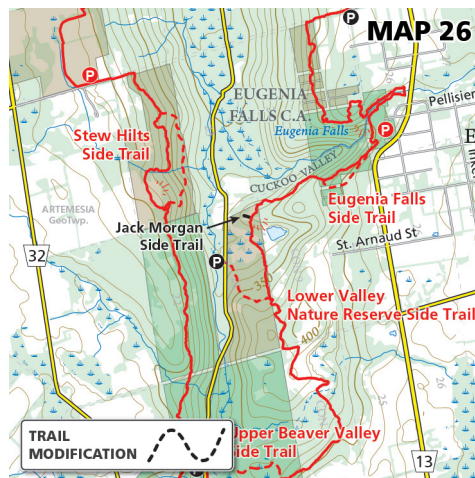
A new side trail, Beech Grove Side Trail, has been blazed on the Sheryl & Jim Phillips Easement (secured by the Bruce Trail Conservancy in 2024), creating a 1.1 km loop on the property with the main Bruce Trail.

Beech Grove Side Trail = 340 metres



### Map 26 – Beaver Valley – Jack Morgan Side Trail

On June 14, 2025, the Beaver Valley Bruce Trail Club officially opened the Jack Morgan Side Trail.



This side trail honours volunteer Jack Morgan, who passed away in 2024, for his pivotal work in landowner relations, land securing and trail development over decades.

Formerly the Upper Beaver Valley Side

Trail, the Jack Morgan Side Trail is a 40-metre trail ending at a scenic viewing area overlooking the Boyne River and the upper reaches of the Beaver Valley.

Much of what can be seen from the lookout is part of the "Falling Water" route for the Bruce Trail that Jack spearheaded. Bringing together his skills in many areas, Jack helped to permanently preserve a ribbon of wilderness for the Bruce Trail within the Beaver Valley section.

### Map 26 – Beaver Valley – Eagle's Summit reroute and East Mountain Side Trail

The Beaver Valley Bruce Trail Club has completed a major reroute of the main Bruce Trail onto the newly secured Eagle's Summit Nature Reserve (2025), and created a new East Mountain Side Trail to create a beautiful loop with the Main Trail.

New Main Trail (in solid black on map) = 2.4 km

East Mountain Side Trail = 3.2 km

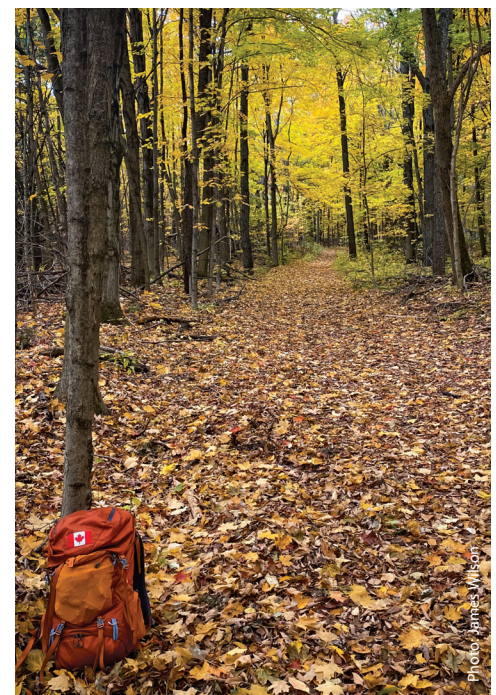
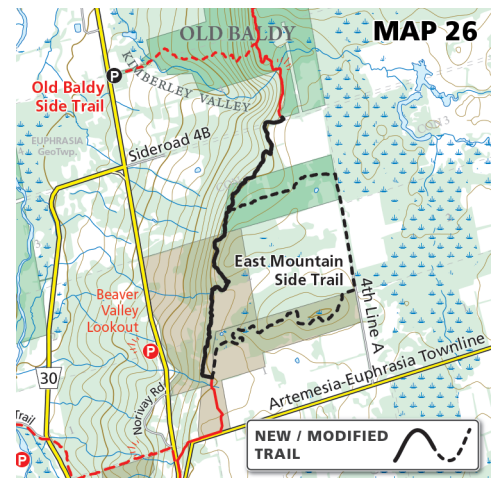




Photo: Jeff Gillies

# Trail Changes & Notices

## SYDENHAM

### Map 29/30 – Sydenham – Woodford area reroute

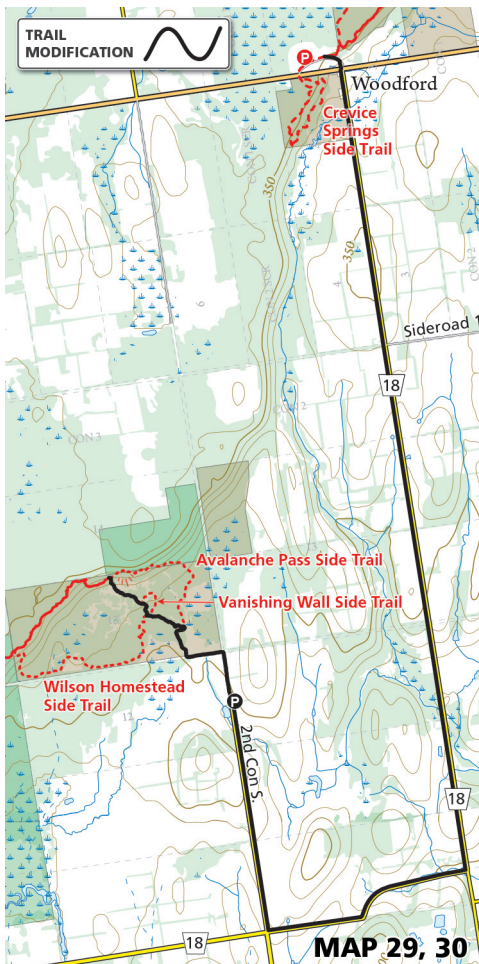
At the request of private landowners, the main Bruce Trail south of Woodford has been rerouted. The main Bruce Trail is closed between its south intersection with Crevice Springs Side Trail and its intersection with the Waisberg Side Trail.

**To bypass this closure:** Hikers arriving on the Main Trail **from the south** should take Silent Valley Side Trail to 2nd Concession South, follow that to Grey Road 18. Follow Grey Road 18 east and then north to Woodford then west on Highway 26 to regain the Bruce Trail.

Hikers arriving on the Main Trail **from the north** should take Grey Road 18 south out of Woodford, then west to 2nd Concession South. Take 2nd Concession South to the Silent Valley Side Trail, which will meet the main Bruce Trail.

The loop created by the main Bruce Trail and the Crevice Springs Side Trail south of Woodford remains open.

Please respect the wishes of the landowner and do not hike in the closed section.

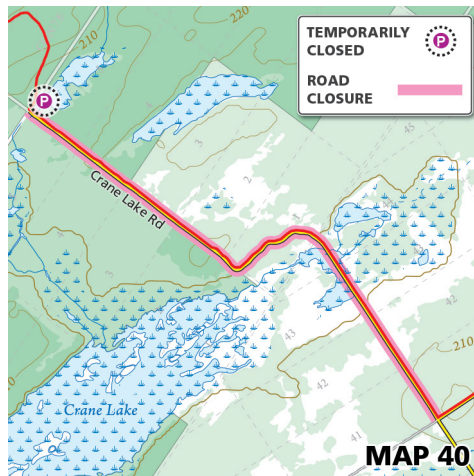


## PENINSULA

### Map 40 – Peninsula – Crane Lake Road, Temporary Closure

Crane Lake Road north of Lindsay Road 40 is closed to vehicle traffic (for all but emergency vehicles) due to flooding. The parking lot at the end of Crane Lake Road is also closed. These closures follow a council decision May 26, 2025 by the Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula.

Pedestrians are still permitted on Crane Lake Road so the main Bruce Trail along the road remains open. Expect flooding in some sections.



For road closure details visit: <https://www.northbrucepeninsula.ca/government/roads-sidewalks/road-conditions-and-closures/>

### Map 40 – Peninsula – Mountain Trout Camp, parking details

The details for day parking at Mountain Trout Camp have changed slightly.

Hikers are asked to reserve parking ahead of time by emailing [camping@mountaintroutcamp.com](mailto:camping@mountaintroutcamp.com) (preferred), or if email is not available, by phoning the camp at 519-795-7655. *Capacity: 5. Parking fees apply. Parking not available in winter (only during the camp's season between the second Friday of May until Thanksgiving Monday).*



Photo: James Wilson

# OUR GENEROUS DONORS

The Bruce Trail Conservancy extends deepest gratitude to all our donors whose generous support we rely on to protect, steward and connect people to the Niagara Escarpment.

While gifts of \$250 or more receive recognition in Bruce Trail Conservancy Magazine, we remain grateful for every donation received in support of our mission. Together we are preserving a ribbon of wilderness, for everyone, forever. Sincere thanks to the following donors whose support was received April 1 to June 30, 2025.

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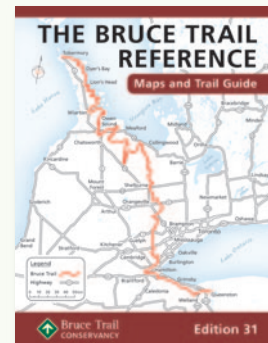
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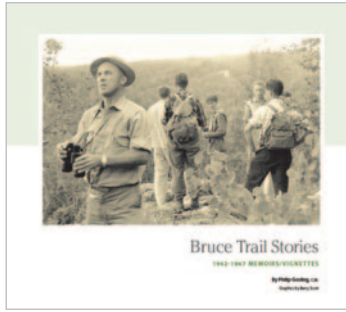
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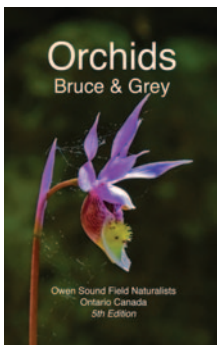


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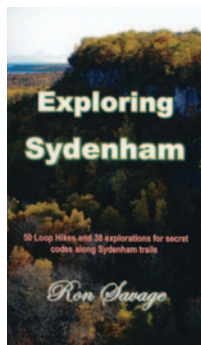
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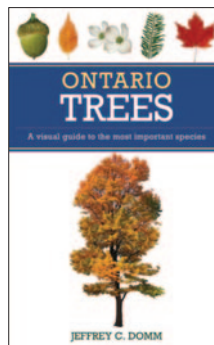
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Connect to ...nature  
...friends and family  
...new acquaintances  
...Ontario's Greenbelt  
...and yourself.



Photo: Kathleen Stahlbaum

Come and celebrate the many ways the Bruce Trail fosters connections.  
**Join us at one of nine free Bruce Trail Day events this October 5.**

*Learn more inside on page 9 or visit [brucetrail.org/bruce-trail-day-2025](http://brucetrail.org/bruce-trail-day-2025)*



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