

INSIDE: EXPLORE LIKE A LOCAL

VOL. 62, NO. 3, SUMMER 2025

Bruce Trail

C O N S E R V A N C Y

MAGAZINE

A person with a backpack is walking away from the camera on a wooden boardwalk that winds through a lush, moss-covered forest. The boardwalk is flanked by wooden railings. The surrounding environment is dense with green moss and ferns on the rocks and trees, creating a vibrant and natural atmosphere.

Accessing
Nature

Our Mission

Preserving a ribbon of wilderness, for everyone, forever.



Bruce Trail
CONSERVANCY

SUMMER 2025



Photo: Dan Dick

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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



Photo: © Rebecca Dinkelgel

Cover photo: Bruce Trail in Mono Cliffs Provincial Park, by Moeyyad Qureshi

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Chief Executive Officer's Message



The Bruce Trail is an integral part of every community it passes through.

It's a place for exploration and exercise, offers opportunities to meet other nature enthusiasts, and protects Ontario's beautiful natural heritage. Our iconic Bruce Trail traverses 23 municipalities including dozens of small communities and villages nestled into the Niagara Escarpment. It truly is the ribbon of wilderness that connects these communities together.

Stretching over 900 km across Ontario, the Bruce Trail is within an hour's drive for over 8 million people. It passes through one of the most densely populated areas in Canada, providing access to near urban nature and opportunities for wellness, education, and reflection. Crucially, the Bruce Trail

is a free public recreational resource; a place where people of all ages, interests and backgrounds can find inspiration, solace, and a deep connection to the nature in their community.

Working together with our nine Bruce Trail Clubs, we aim to create a welcoming environment that fosters a sense of shared stewardship for this precious natural corridor. We organize hikes, maintain trails, care for Escarpment habitats, and create opportunities for individuals to come together in their love for natural spaces by accessing a world-class footpath.

Our efforts to offer access to nature were certainly put to the test this spring when ice storms created widespread damage across hundreds of kilometres of the Bruce Trail. Yet, in the face of this significant challenge, our volunteers rose to the occasion. In the pages to follow, you'll read more about their extraordinary collective effort to restore safe access to the Trail. The dedication

and hard work they demonstrate showcase the true power and spirit of the Bruce Trail community.

Later in this issue of *Bruce Trail Conservancy Magazine* you will meet Julie Sawchuk, an accessibility advocate who is helping us find opportunities for greater inclusion of those who use mobility devices or have other accessibility needs. We also share a new virtual way to access the Bruce Trail and learn more about the incredible geology that makes this place so unique.

Providing access to nature has been a core objective since the founding of the Bruce Trail. We are so proud of the strides we have made as a community in turning this dream into a reality while protecting our irreplaceable natural heritage. •

Michael McDonald,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Photo: Michael McDonald

NIAGARA

niagarabruce-trail.club

Laura Secord Hike – June 22, 2025

Enjoy a part of our Canadian heritage by hiking along the Bruce Trail from Laura Secord's Homestead in Queenston to DeCew House in Thorold. We are sure this 32 km hike was a challenge for Laura in a long dress and no Nikes, but we never heard any complaints. Follow her lead and rise to the challenge. Registration is \$40 for members, \$50 for non-members; kids \$25 and \$30. Fee includes bus, checkpoints, light lunch and a badge.

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 checkpoints and a badge.

IROQUOIA

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



Content deadline for Blazes for the fall 2025 issue is August 2, 2025.
Send content to: Laura Tuohy, BTC Manager of Community Engagement, at ltuohy@bruce-trail.org

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.

Steeltown Stomp – October 4, 2025

Looking for 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 7 sets of Escarpment stairs in Hamilton. Everyone who completes the



Photo: Man-Kiun Chan

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.



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!

Registration opens on July 14, 2025 on hikes.brucetrail.org.

TORONTO

torontobrucetrailclub.org

Toronto End-to-End – September 6-7, 2025

Please join us for our annual self-led End-to-End. You can enjoy and complete the 50 km distance over two days (approximately 28 km on Saturday and 22 km on Sunday) or the entire 50 km on Saturday.

Whichever you choose, both hikes will traverse the varied terrain from just south of Hilton Falls to the south entrance of the Cheltenham Badlands. Checkpoint stations will be approximately every 10 km offering refreshments, water refill, and assistance. The 1-Day hike fee is \$40 for members and \$45 for non-members and includes bus transportation from the meeting point to the hike starting point, refreshments, parking and permit costs, online registration fees, and the official E2E badge. The price for the 2-Day hike is \$55 for members and \$65 for non-members and includes all the same benefits of the 1-Day hike plus the added cost of a second bus on both days. For child members, the cost is \$40 and for child non-members, the price is \$50 (for the 2-Day).

Registration opens June 9, 2025 at 9:00 am for Bruce Trail Conservancy members at hikes.brucetrail.org under Saturday September 6, 2025. If any spots are still available at 9:00 am, Monday June 23, 2025, registration will also be opened then for non-members. Details will be emailed to participants once registration is received. These are longer

Visit Club websites for more news, events and hikes.

hikes and not suitable for beginning hikers. For both events, hikers are expected to maintain an average pace of 4 km/hr (or more). For the 1-Day hike, hikers must reach each checkpoint by a prescribed time to continue and ensure everyone is off the trail before dark.

Space is limited, hikes go rain or shine, and no dogs are permitted on this event. There will be no refunds or tax receipts issued for anyone who cancels their registration. For questions, please contact Jacquie Van Dyke at vdyke0946@gmail.com.

CALEDON HILLS

caledonbrucetrail.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 opens June 30 at 8:00 a.m. on the BTC Hike Schedule. 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!

PENINSULA

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



Hikers at the Caledon Hills Fall Colours End-to-End in 2024



Photo: Sandra Green

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 and you'll both be supporting the future of the Bruce Trail.

Referring is simple:

1. Get your **unique referral code** from your login at 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/ to get started.



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



Membership Survey 2025

Share your feedback for a chance to win

Please take our short online membership survey and let us know about your experience as a member of the Bruce Trail Conservancy.

Thousands of people like you support the Bruce Trail Conservancy with a membership. We would like to hear from as many as possible to build the best understanding of our supporters.

Your participation will help us improve our membership program and services, and put the Bruce Trail Conservancy in a better position to grow our community.

Complete the survey and you'll be given the option to enter a draw to win one of five \$100 Bruce Trail Conservancy Store Gift Cards. The draw entry will be kept separate from your survey responses which will remain anonymous.

Take the survey online by July 15, 2025 at:
www.surveymonkey.com/r/2025btcmember



Bruce Trail Day - October 5, 2025

Sticker Design Contest: *Connections on the Trail*

Design the official Bruce Trail Day 2025 sticker and have your art connect with thousands of trail lovers!

This Bruce Trail Day we want to celebrate all the ways the Bruce Trail creates connections – to nature, within nature, between people and among communities.

The Bruce Trail Conservancy is calling for creative designs for our Bruce Trail Day 2025 sticker that encapsulate this year's theme of "Connections on the Trail."

The winning design will be printed and given for free to all Bruce Trail Day participants on October 5, 2025 and will be used in Bruce Trail Day 2025 promotion.

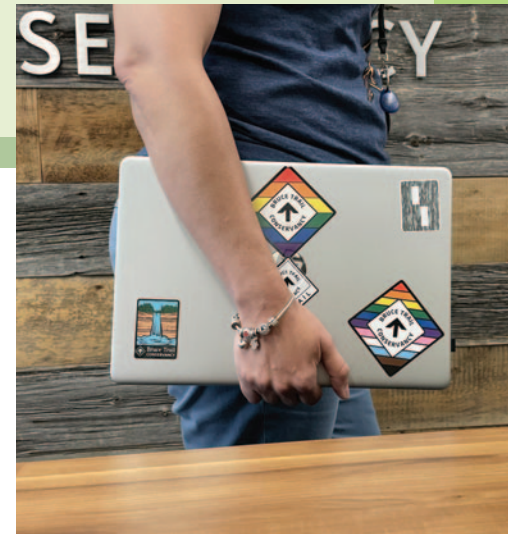
Prizes:

Five finalists will be featured in the fall 2025 issue of Bruce Trail Conservancy Magazine.

One Grand Prize Winner will have their design become the official Bruce Trail Day 2025 sticker and will receive a sticker package and a \$100 gift card for the Bruce Trail Conservancy store.

Submissions due: July 31, 2025

For contest details visit brucetrail.org/bruce-trail-day-2025



BTC in the Community

Bringing the Bruce Trail to you!

Throughout the year, the Bruce Trail Conservancy and its nine Bruce Trail Clubs enjoy participating in community events in and around the Niagara Escarpment. Volunteers and staff set up an information booth to share all things Bruce Trail with event participants.

Here are just a few of the events where you'll find a Bruce Trail booth this summer:

- Guelph & District Multicultural Festival, June 13-15
- Pride Toronto, June 27-29
- Waterdown Farmers' Market, June 28
- Canada Day (Hamilton), July 1
- Pride Halton (Milton), July 20
- Dundas Cactus Festival, Aug. 15-17
- Winona Peach Festival, Aug. 22-24
- Supercrawl (Hamilton), Sep. 13-14

We're adding new events all the time. For updates visit: brucetrail.org/btc-in-the-community-2025



Photo: Laura Tuchy

Interested in becoming an Outreach Volunteer?

Volunteers make these events possible. If you love the Bruce Trail and enjoy sharing that love with others, we'd like to meet you!

Outreach Volunteers promote the Bruce Trail Conservancy, encourage supporters, and sell memberships and merchandise by staffing an information booth at a community event or trade show. Volunteers receive training and generally work with at least one other experienced volunteer or staff member.

Please fill out a volunteer application form at brucetrail.org/apply-online-to-volunteer and include "Outreach Volunteer" in the positions field.



Passing the Mantle: Farewell to Leah, Welcome to Jaclyn

Leah Myers (second from left, in purple) and Jaclyn Moody (centre, in grey) with BTC Board and staff at Fisher's Pond Nature Reserve.

Photo: Michael McDonald

On July 1, at the transition of our fiscal year, Leah Myers will pass the role of Chair of the Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC) Board to Jaclyn Moody.

Leah reaches her term limit of nine years on the BTC Board this fall. As part of a carefully considered succession plan, Leah is stepping down from the role of Chair in July and will remain on the BTC Board as a Director until her term ends in November.

For more than a decade, Leah has been an enduring champion of the BTC, showing her deep passion for our mission. As a member, a donor, a hiker, and a nature lover, Leah has given her talents and skills as a Board member since 2016. Leah has generously shared expertise gained over a 30-year career with the Ontario government, bringing insights into government relations and thoughtful leadership in times of uncertainty. This was demonstrated several times over the course of her tenure, but perhaps most notably in 2018 when she temporarily stepped off the Board to take on the position of interim Chief Executive Officer.

Leah resumed her Board work in 2019, bringing with her an enhanced understanding of the day-to-day operations of the BTC. She became Chair in January 2020, only months before

COVID-19 upended daily lives. Her guidance was instrumental in helping the BTC navigate the changes and challenges the pandemic brought and has contributed significantly to the success the BTC has experienced since, including the addition of more than 3,000 acres of sensitive Niagara Escarpment lands to our conservation corridor. Her enduring focus on good governance and relationship-building has left an indelible impact on the BTC and the beautiful lands we are called to protect.

Leah passes the mantle to Jaclyn Moody, who joined the Board in 2019. During her tenure, Jaclyn has served on the Governance Committee and currently serves as Co-Chair of the Finance & Risk Committee, bringing to these roles significant expertise in governance, risk management and finance from her career in the investment industry. Currently, Jaclyn is Vice-President, Head of Sustainability and Institutional Services at Burgundy Asset Management, where she leads ESG-focused research and engagement efforts.

Jaclyn is a certified board director with

the Institute of Corporate Directors (ICD.D) who has a deep-seated love of nature. Prior to her career in the finance sector, Jaclyn's passion for wildlife inspired her to spend many years working alongside veterinarians after pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences at the University of Guelph, where she graduated with Honours. Jaclyn believes in the importance of environmental stewardship and responsibly connecting others with our *ribbon of wilderness*. As such, she loves spending time hiking the Bruce Trail with her family and friends.

"Jaclyn's professional background and passion for the BTC's mission will serve her well in this role," Leah said in a letter to members in April. "I have truly enjoyed working with Jaclyn over the years and have every confidence that she will bring strong strategic leadership to the Board during her tenure as Chair."

The BTC is tremendously grateful to Leah for her many years of service and to Jaclyn for taking on this important role that will support the continued success of the BTC and our mission of *preserving a ribbon of wilderness, for everyone, forever.* •

Recognizing Kindness: New Award Celebrates Small Acts



Every day on the Bruce Trail, people show kindness, demonstrate consideration, and share compassion for others. These values are essential to the Bruce Trail experience but may go unrecognized.

The new *BTC CEO Random Acts of Kindness Awards* are an opportunity for us to celebrate these kind acts. Introduced this year, these annual awards will be presented to any BTC member or supporter who has demonstrated an act of kindness towards another BTC member, supporter or user on the Bruce Trail or while volunteering for the Bruce Trail. These may be any act of kindness – large or small. The number of awards presented may change from year to year.

To nominate someone for this award, head to brucetrail.org/award-nominations to tell us about their act of kindness. Nominators will need to submit their nominee's information, including name and contact details, and at least 100 words describing their random act of kindness and why they should be recognized with this award.

Recipients will receive a special certificate, presented at a lunch and hike on the Bruce Trail with the BTC CEO in September (exact date and location to be determined). Recipients will also be recognized in the awards video to be shared at the BTC Annual General Meeting.

Submit a nomination by June 30 at brucetrail.org/award-nominations.



Photo: Pamela Katch

Ice Storm Recovery

By Laura Tuohy



Volunteers from across the Bruce Trail community rallied together to restore safe access to hundreds of kilometres of trail after the destructive ice storms of March.

Tom Thayer had never seen anything like it. He has lived in Dufferin County for decades and has volunteered with the Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC) since 2016, yet for him the late-March ice storms caused “destruction like I’ve never seen here before.” When Tom woke on the morning of March 30, he found his power out and trees laying across his driveway. Later, when he went to check on BTC’s Honeywood Ridge property where he serves as land steward, he could barely access the area. “It looked like the entire forest had fallen over,” he recalls.

As the storms’ aftermath unfolded, reports came in from the Dufferin Hi-Land, Blue Mountains, Beaver Valley, Sydenham and Peninsula sections – well over half the Bruce Trail – of unprecedented damage on the Trail. And the full extent of the destruction was

not yet clear. Across a swath of southern Ontario, hundreds of communities were without power, roads were closed, and natural areas were a tangled mess of fallen trees and snapped branches.

Our beloved footpath seemed lost under a thick layer of frozen debris. But it was within this moment of crisis that Bruce Trail volunteers showed the remarkable power of community effort.

Closing the Trail

In the wake of the storms, Bruce Trail Clubs made the difficult but important decision to close four entire sections of Trail – roughly 400 km of main Bruce Trail and over 175 km of side trails, from Mono Centre in Dufferin Hi-Land to Warton in Sydenham.

Such widespread closures hadn’t been seen since COVID-19. The last significant ice storm affecting the Bruce

Trail was 11 years ago when heavy snow and ice caused damage in the Iroquoia, Toronto and Caledon Hills sections. But even then, extensive closures weren’t necessary.

Closing the Bruce Trail this time was crucial for the safety of both hikers and volunteers. Hundreds of fallen trees and branches blocked the route, and many standing trees had been weakened by the storms, creating dangerous overhead hazards. Volunteers needed time to fully assess the damage and safely restore access to the Trail.

Above and Beyond

Early spring is usually a busy time for our Trail Development & Maintenance teams as they assess the condition of the Trail after regular winter storms, deal with flooding, and clear the occasional downed tree. But these intense ice



Photo: David Tuley

storms, one after another in one weekend, compounded their work exponentially.

On top of that, simply getting to many parts of the Trail in the days after the storms proved difficult. Power lines were down, roads were closed, and many volunteers had to deal with damage on their own properties.

Despite these challenges, the Bruce Trail volunteer community came together, showing an unwavering commitment to the Trail and to each other.

Pulling Together

Within days of the storms' end, volunteers began to coordinate cleanup efforts. Trail Directors from each of the affected Bruce Trail Clubs worked to plan and organize teams. Trail Captains investigated their designated sections and sent back reports. Trained sawyers – volunteers certified in chainsaw use – were dispatched to the hardest-hit areas, while new volunteers eagerly stepped forward to offer help wherever they could.

With typical Bruce Trail solidarity, volunteers from the southern Bruce Trail Clubs offered their support, travelling north and committing multiple days and long hours of work on the Trail. Trail Directors flexibly coordinated how best to utilize the additional helping hands.

“The idea quickly formed to lend a hand once we understood how extensive the damage was,” recalls sawyer Ian Grindall, “It built a real sense of camaraderie, as well as a sense of achievement to help with the reopening of the Trail.”

The magnitude of the work was enormous, and the going was slow at times. “It took three sawyers plus debris helpers a whole day to claim back 1 km of trail,” reported Ian, “Exhausting work,



Photo: Sydenham Bruce Trail Club

but so rewarding.” Similar progress was being made by other crews. With persistence and teamwork, impassable sections became clear, bit by bit.

Within ten days, the first sections of the Trail were reopened. And within six weeks, access to most of the Trail had been fully restored. Hundreds of volunteers contributed thousands of hours to make this recovery possible.

The Path Ahead

It's easy to take for granted the hard work that goes into maintaining a safe and accessible Bruce Trail. In every season, day by day and week by week, Trail Captains and maintenance volunteers make sure the Trail is safe and passable, work together to remove hazards and rubbish, keep blazes in good shape, and ensure critical infrastructure is in place. In times of crisis, their hard work and commitment becomes even more apparent.

The volunteers who dedicated their time to restoring the path have not only cleared debris but have also reminded us of the power of community action, the value of helping our neighbours, and just how important our world-class footpath is to communities across Ontario. Because of their tireless efforts, the Bruce Trail is once again open to all, a free public resource for people to explore, spend time with loved ones in nature, and find moments of reflection. The canopy may look a little different, but thanks to our volunteers, the spirit of the Bruce Trail remains the same. •



Photo: Lilla Fodor



Photo: Dan Dick

GeoHikes: Exploring Escarpment Geology on and off the Bruce Trail

By Ali Schofield

The newly-launched Bruce Trail GeoHikes Hub highlights the significant geology of the landscape we love.

As I've explored the Niagara Escarpment on the Bruce Trail, I've often tried to imagine: What did this landscape look like before humans set foot here? How did these iconic rock formations come to be? I've wondered about the bands of rock that line its waterfalls, the mysterious caves carved into its walls, and the giant mossy rocks beneath my feet. The Escarpment's ancient beauty piques my curiosity and I'm filled with questions.

Enter the Bruce Trail GeoHikes Hub, a virtual tool brimming with information that brings the geological history of the Escarpment to life. With the help of this interactive website, I've started looking beneath the footprints on our path and into the geology that is, quite literally, the foundation for the Bruce Trail.

The Geology of the Niagara Escarpment at Your Fingertips

Launched earlier this year, the Bruce Trail GeoHikes Hub is a free online resource that offers explorers of all ages the opportunity to learn about the rich geological history of the Niagara Escarpment through a variety of virtual geoscience tours. Among the geological

gems found along the Escarpment are dramatic waterfalls, hidden caves, and even remnants of structures built with the rich natural resources of southern Ontario. Each GeoHike describes such points of interest, offering valuable insight into the area, how the land came to be formed and the species that lived here millions of years ago.

The Bruce Trail GeoHikes Hub is the result of a years-long collaboration

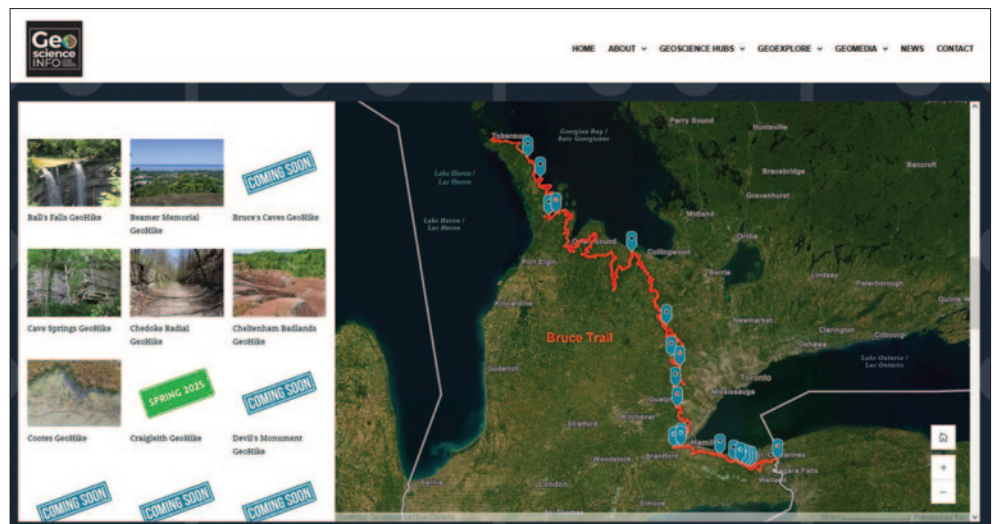
powered by the expertise of the APGO Education Foundation (APGOEF), in partnership with McMaster University and the Bruce Trail Conservancy. The APGOEF works to advance public education in the area of geoscience by providing free, accessible, and accurate information through their innovative website GeoscienceINFO.com.

"Over the past three years we have taken our goal of covering the Bruce Trail with interesting and informative GeoHikes from concept to reality," said Dr. Bill Pearson, P.Geo. Founder and Chair of the APGO Education Foundation. "GeoHikes provide a fun, interesting, and accessible method of communicating geoscience information to a large and diverse public audience."

Explore the Bruce Trail from Home – or Enhance Your Next Hike

The Bruce Trail GeoHikes Hub is an easy and accessible way to explore parts of the Bruce Trail from home. By visiting the website <https://geoscienceinfo.com/bruce-trail-hub>, you can select a hike from the map and follow the stop numbers along the top of the page for details about each point of interest. What follows are detailed descriptions of the geological site, including historical background and images, interactive 3D models, 360-degree panoramas, fascinating animations, maps and diagrams, and both written and audio descriptions of the area and its significance. It's a particularly interesting way to learn more about areas of the Trail, enhance your knowledge ahead of a trek, or gain new perspective on a familiar spot.

GeoHikes are also ideal for on-the-go learning. If you enter the web address in



Access the Bruce Trail GeoHikes Hub by visiting

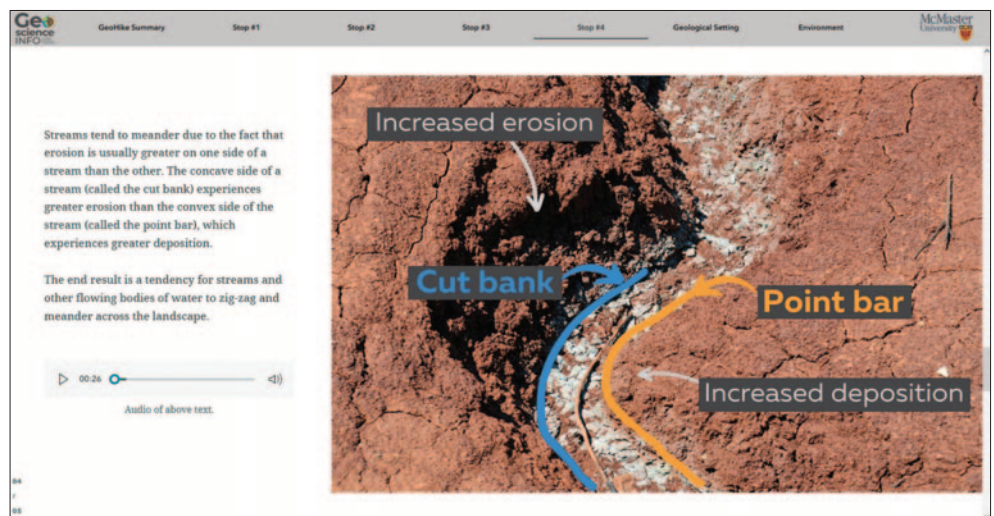
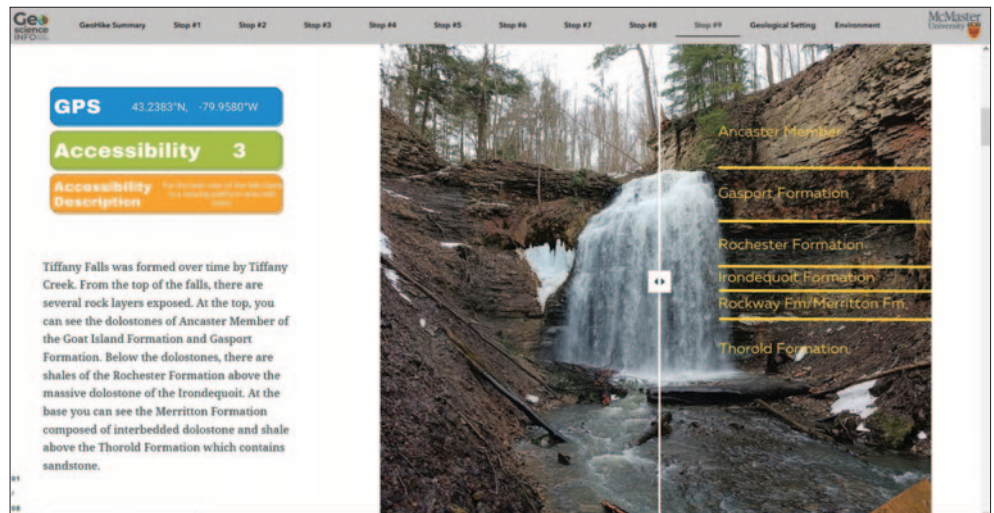
<https://geoscienceinfo.com/bruce-trail-hub/>

Bruce Trail GeoHikes: Currently Available

- Ball's Falls (Niagara Section)
- Cave Springs (Niagara Section)
- Rockway (Niagara Section)
- Beamer Memorial (Iroquoia Section)
- Chedoke Radial Trail (Iroquoia Section)
- Cootes (Iroquoia Section)
- Sulphur Springs (Iroquoia Section)
- Tiffany Falls (Iroquoia Section)
- Cheltenham Badlands (Toronto Section)

Bruce Trail GeoHikes: Coming Soon

- Locust Grove (Niagara Section)
- Louth (Niagara Section)
- Short Hills (Niagara Section)
- Hilton Falls (Toronto Section)
- Limehouse (Toronto Section)
- Forks of the Credit (Caledon Hills Section)
- Mono Cliffs (Caledon Hills Section)
- Craigeith (Beaver Valley Section)
- Bruce's Caves (Sydenham Section)
- Devil's Monument (Peninsula Section)
- Lion's Head (Peninsula Section)
- Spirit Rock (Peninsula Section)



your phone's browser, you can follow the prompts for each point of interest as you hike. Each GeoHike stop begins with GPS coordinates, an accessibility rating and description of the terrain. With the audio descriptions of each point of interest, it's like having a geology expert and tour guide right in your pocket.

Currently, there are nine Bruce Trail GeoHikes available, including popular

destinations such as Balls Falls in the Niagara Region, Tiffany Falls in Hamilton, and the Cheltenham Badlands in Caledon. An additional 12 Bruce Trail GeoHikes throughout the 1,300 km Bruce Trail system will go live this spring, including four on the Saugeen (Bruce) Peninsula.

Each GeoHike typically takes one to three hours to hike. Before you hit the

Trail, here are some tips to make the most of your experience:

- Bring a magnifying glass, hand lens or binoculars: All points of interest should be visible from the Bruce Trail, but these tools could help you see certain geological details a little better.
- Leave no trace: Take only pictures and leave rocks and fossils for others to enjoy and learn from.
- Stay on the marked path: Please do not go off Trail to get a closer look, as this may disturb vulnerable habitats.



APGOEF-led hikes became the basis of the virtual Bruce Trail GeoHikes Hub

More Ways to Explore Ontario's Geological History

In addition to the Bruce Trail GeoHikes Hub, APGOEF offers other programs that dive into the geological history of Ontario. They offer a variety of Urban GeoWalks, GeoPaddles for exploration on the water, and GeoRoutes for driving excursions in Hubs for Kingston, Niagara, Ottawa, Toronto, and Sudbury. For educators, APGOEF offers a geology course kit with resources, field trip suggestions, creative activities, quizzes, and more. •

Progress Before Perfection

Improving Accessibility on the Bruce Trail

By Ali Schofield



Julie on the Goderich to Guelph Rail Trail

What do you think of when you hear the word “accessible”?

Perhaps the blue wheelchair icon on a parking space or a ramp outside of a local business. What about when it comes to nature? Does a “wilderness footpath” seem incompatible with “accessibility”?

For accessibility consultant and outdoor enthusiast, Julie Sawchuk, having thoughtfully designed outdoor spaces is essential to maintaining a relationship with nature.

In March 2025, Julie was invited by the BTC to share her story, experience and expertise with staff. Over the course of her visit, she helped us further understand the important role we can play in creating opportunities for everyone to explore the ribbon of wilderness that is the Bruce Trail.

LIFE CAN CHANGE IN AN INSTANT

In the summer of 2015, while cycling in Huron County training for a triathlon, Julie Sawchuk was struck by a vehicle. Julie sustained many severe injuries, including damage to her spinal cord, which would forever change her mobility and the trajectory of her life.

When she got home from the hospital, it quickly became clear that her beloved 100-year-old farmhouse was incompatible with her new means of moving around: a manual wheelchair. Between awkward counter heights, incompatible bathroom equipment and a lack of space to maneuver her wheelchair, she found she was constantly fighting with her environment, draining her energy.

Something had to change. While plans to build a more accessible home on their property began, Julie turned her attention to the outside world.

“ACCESSIBILITY EQUALS ENERGY”

As she adapted to using her wheelchair, Julie found that the environments she needed to navigate were leaving her exhausted. “I use a manual chair which means I’m doing things under my own steam,” Julie explained. She quickly came to understand that the more accessible a place or experience is, the more energy she had to spend enjoying it, not just navigating it.

This insight drove Julie to set up her accessibility consulting business, Sawchuk Accessible Solutions. Drawing on her previous career as a teacher, she now aims to help others reimagine public spaces and make the world a more inclusive and accessible place.

Julie has become an advocate in her community, where she works as a volunteer and an accessibility consultant with organizations like the Goderich to Guelph Rail Trail (G2G). In these roles, Julie provides insight into how to improve outdoor experiences on trails and other recreational areas and make them more accessible, focusing on factors like slope, trail width, surface material and communications.

Over the years, her work has taken her across Canada and around the world, helping organizations rethink their perspective on accessibility and advising them on how to make changes that include more people with disabilities. She has also created an online course about creating accessible spaces.

MAINTAINING A RELATIONSHIP WITH NATURE AND FAMILY

Before her accident, Julie wasn't just an active person, she loved spending time outdoors. As she started navigating the world in her wheelchair, she experienced firsthand the challenges facing those who want to explore the outdoors with a mobility device.

"What I miss the most is being able to touch trees. Prior to my accident, I was able to just walk up to a tree. Now, even being able to reach out and put my hand on the bark of a tree is a challenge" Julie said.

"Being outside is so invigorating and I just want to keep that going," Julie explained. Today, she seeks out accessible

paths and hiking routes she can traverse in her wheelchair, either on her own or with her family. "One of my favorite things to do with my family is to connect with them outside. We go for hikes or go kayaking. Take away the digital world and just be in nature; you end up having conversations that you don't have when there are other distractions around. You can also just be quiet and still together."

PROGRESS BEFORE PERFECTION

One of the key takeaways from Julie's visit with BTC staff was the critical importance of descriptive information to give people the information to decide for themselves what outdoor activities are right for them.

"It's important to provide people with opportunities to be as independent as they wish to be," said Julie. "For instance, what's the parking like? Am I going to get my wheels caught up in so much gravel or wood-chips I can't even back away from my car once I get into my chair? And, if a parking area has a slope, it's dangerous for the person whose mobility device might roll away."

Providing qualitative information about parking, trail conditions and other amenities is above all, empowering. Julie added, "people can then factor that in and ask themselves 'do I have enough energy for this today?'" Again, accessibility equals energy.

Julie advocates that progress in increasing accessibility is more important than perfection. She was quick to clarify that she is not recommending the paving of the Bruce Trail, but for the meaningful consideration of ways to improve accessibility when making updates to infrastructure and amenities or creating new trails in low-impact areas. It also





AccessNow mappers like Aaron and Alex will access sections of the Bruce Trail from their perspectives, providing qualitative accessibility information.

Photo: Alexa Fernando / AccessNow

means involving those living with disability in the planning and communication about trails to help us create opportunities for more people to connect with nature. Small improvements are possible and are better than no action at all.

“Don’t let fear rule your perspective on accessibility. Challenge your way of thinking about people with disabilities,” she said. “Don’t assume that just because a person has a disability, they need help... Ableism is everywhere. Recognizing it is the first step.”

The need for accessible spaces goes beyond those who use mobility devices or have a visible disability. Pain, for example, is one of the leading types of disability, affecting people in a variety of circumstances to varying degrees. Creating accessible spaces then isn’t just a matter of accommodating those with permanent disabilities – it’s about ensuring that everyone, at some point in their lives, can access and enjoy the natural world around them.

“Even if this isn’t your lived experience you can imagine a time when you might need accessibility support,” Julie said, adding that as our population ages, having more accessible and low-impact spaces will enable more people in our communities to maintain their connection with nature and each other.

BRUCE TRAIL FOR ALL

Fulfilling the Bruce Trail Conservancy’s mission of *preserving a ribbon of wilderness, for everyone, forever*, requires the inclusion of diverse voices and perspectives, and means offering everyone the opportunity to explore our conservation corridor.

The Bruce Trail is a wilderness trail, and, as it traverses the Escarpment, it can be rugged, strenuous, and challenging. However, this is not the case for every kilometre – there are many spots along the Bruce Trail that are more accessible for

people of varying abilities to connect with nature.

The BTC is embarking on a project with the accessibility experts at AccessNow, an organization that engages people with lived experience to “map” public spaces with qualitative accessibility information. AccessNow mappers will visit select areas on the Bruce Trail and provide descriptions of the surface and slope of the Trail, and distance between amenities and points of interest. The goal will be to provide information to help people with varying levels of ability choose the best hiking experience for themselves. As we start to identify areas for “low impact” hiking in the coming months and years, we will include them on our website, on the Bruce Trail app, and in future editions of the Bruce Trail Reference and Guide.

The work of Sawchuk Accessible Solutions and AccessNow are reminders that creating accessible spaces isn’t just about meeting regulations – it’s about making the world a more inclusive and empowering place for all. We are excited to do our part and look forward to updating our community as this important work continues. •



“Low impact” areas of the Bruce Trail like this one at Riverside Woods will be identified and described to help users make choices.

Photo: Elizabeth Ganong

To learn more about our partners in creating a more inclusive Bruce Trail experience, visit:

Sawchuk Accessible Solutions: www.juliesawchuk.ca

AccessNow: <https://accessnow.com/outdoors>

Help ensure the Bruce Trail is ready for anything.

Spring is a season of renewal. It's a time when the Niagara Escarpment comes to life, and Bruce Trail Conservancy staff and volunteers begin important trail and stewardship work.

But this year, spring began with a devastating storm.

On the weekend of March 29-30, a severe ice storm hit the northern half of the Bruce Trail, leaving destruction in its wake. For the first time in our history, four entire sections of the Bruce Trail – Dufferin Hi-Land, Blue Mountains, Beaver Valley, and Sydenham – were closed due to hazardous conditions. **That's over 400 km of Main Trail and 175 km of Side Trail – nearly half the Bruce Trail – suddenly inaccessible.**

Thanks to the dedication and skill of volunteers, most of the Trail reopened within six weeks. But with climate change driving more frequent and extreme weather events, **we need to be ready for the next emergency.**



Photo: Laura Tudy

To meet these growing challenges, the Bruce Trail Conservancy must invest in preparedness. With your help we can ensure volunteers have the training, tools, and support needed to act quickly, safely, and effectively when disaster strikes.

Your donation today will support critical investments in emergency preparedness — priorities identified and requested by our dedicated volunteers — including:

- Training of new sawyers, increasing the pool of volunteers certified in safe chainsaw use.
- Protective gear for sawyers.
- New tools and servicing for existing tools.
- Updated digital systems to support and coordinate volunteers in emergency situations.

The response to the March storm showed what's possible when a strong community comes together. The Bruce Trail Conservancy is grateful for the quick and skilled response of volunteers, and we know that building long-term resiliency takes planning and support.



Photo: Caley Doran

Together, we can weather the storms.

Your gift today will support vital training, equipment, and innovation that will keep the Trail open and thriving, no matter what the future holds.

We are deeply appreciative of our volunteers. Their passion, experience, and commitment brought the Bruce Trail back to life this spring. Let's give them the tools and resources they need to be ready for whatever comes next.

With your help, the Bruce Trail Conservancy will continue to connect people to nature while *preserving a ribbon of wilderness, for everyone, forever.*

The Bruce Trail Conservancy is committed to thoughtful land stewardship and trail building methods that work to mitigate the impacts of climate change on the Trail – but emergency preparedness is just as vital. With your help, we can make the Bruce Trail more sustainable for generations to come.



Photos c/o Peninsula, Sydenham & Caledon Hills Bruce Trail Clubs

Donate today at brucetrail.org

Or by phone at 1-800-665-4453 or by mailing the form below to Bruce Trail Conservancy, PO Box 857, Hamilton, ON L8N 3N9

Yes, I want to build a resilient Bruce Trail!

Enclosed is my: Monthly Gift: \$ _____ / month

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Name: _____ Member# _____ Email: _____

Your email is confidential and will not be shared with 3rd 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.

What's in Your Pack?

With End-to-End Hiker Roopa Dindigal

In this new series, Bruce Trail Conservancy Magazine connects with people who are passionate about the Bruce Trail and asks about what they bring on their adventures.

We're asking hikers, volunteers and explorers alike: What's in your pack? To kick things off, we spoke with end-to-end hiker Roopa Dindigal, member of the Caledon Hills Bruce Trail Club.

Roopa began her first end-to-end hike in 2021 and completed it in November of 2023, tackling the entire Bruce Trail in a series of 59 day hikes. Since then, she's been working on her second end-to-end, completing some sections independently and others through organized Club events. As an end-to-end hiker who is on the Trail in all seasons, Roopa has gained a lot of experience when it comes to what to carry in her pack. Here's what she carries on the Trail during the summer months:

Hydration is key

Roopa's pack includes a built-in two-litre water bladder with a hose that runs over her shoulder for easy sipping in the summer heat. She also packs an extra bottle with an electrolyte drink to help stay hydrated during her 20 km treks.

Extra clothing and layers

To stay dry and avoid chafing, Roopa always carries an extra t-shirt and a spare pair of socks. She often changes into these halfway through her hike for a fresh start. She also keeps a compact, lightweight windbreaker in her pack, in case it gets breezy while on the Trail.

Sun protection

Sunglasses, a hat, sunscreen, and lip balm with SPF are all musts in Roopa's pack.

Bug protection

For buggier areas such as woods and marshes, Roopa brings bug spray as well as a bug net to go over her head. "I've seen people run through the woods because the bugs were so bad in places," she notes.

Lots of small snacks

When she first started her end-to-end journey, Roopa packed full meals. Over time, she realized that she preferred smaller snacks that she could eat while she kept hiking. Now her go-to snacks include power bars, nuts, fruits such as bananas, pretzels, and energy gels. This way, she stays energized, but the food and utensils aren't weighing her down.

First aid

Roopa always carries a well-stocked first aid kit. This includes bandages, a tick removal kit, painkillers, Aspirin, muscle-relief gels, an elastic tensor bandage, and Lopamide. "When exerting your body with over 20 km of hiking a day, you never know what you might need," she says.

Navigation and communication

Roopa's phone and a portable charger are always with her when she hikes. Not only are they essential in case of emergency, but she also uses the Bruce Trail App for navigation.

Roopa's final advice

When asked whether she carries a personal item or good luck charm, Roopa noted that every item has a purpose. "When hiking such long distances, the less you carry, the better. But you should also be safe."

Her final tip for those looking to go the distance? Choose a brightly coloured backpack. "It's easier to recognize and adds an extra level of safety when you're hiking, especially during hunting season." •



Photo: © Roopa Dindigal



Explore Like a Local

With recommendations from Bruce Trail Conservancy volunteers

As Canadians increasingly embrace the importance of 'supporting local', we're launching a new series for Bruce Trail Conservancy Magazine celebrating some of the great small businesses located near the Bruce Trail.

With over 900 km to cover, we've recruited help from local BTC members and volunteers, asking them to share their favourite spots. Whether you're working on your end-to-end or doing a day hike in a section you've never been to, our volunteers offer some amazing suggestions for everything from grabbing a coffee to experiencing live theatre.

To start the series, we spoke with volunteers in the Iroquoia and Caledon Hills Bruce Trail Clubs about their favourite local haunts.

IROQUOIA BRUCE TRAIL CLUB RECOMMENDATIONS

Trails Café Ancaster

286 Wilson St E, Ancaster
Recommended by Doug O., Hike Leader and Community Outreach Volunteer

Doug recommends this new coffee shop for its warm and inclusive vibe. Trails Café is part hiker-and-cyclist-themed café, part community gathering space, where everyone is welcome. The café offers a variety of specialty coffees, sandwiches, soups, salads, and even a Bruce Trail Panini! Doug appreciates the plethora of indoor and outdoor seating and loves that the owners, Arnie and Milap, are enthusiastic hikers themselves, meaning hiking boots are more than welcome.

Bangkok Spoon Deluxe

57 King St W, Dundas
Recommended by Rodney P., Land Steward
Rodney recommends this authentic Thai restaurant, especially if you enjoy a bit of spice. Whether you're dining in or taking out, he says the food is consistently well-prepared and on time, and the staff are always friendly. Rodney's go-to dish is the Thai Mango Chicken, which he says has great flavour.

Copper Kettle Café

312 Dundas St E #4, Waterdown
Recommended by Shirley C., Conservation Volunteer
Located in the heart of scenic Waterdown, Copper Kettle Café is one of Shirley's favourite post-hike stops. The café offers a casual, relaxing vibe, perfect for unwinding. Shirley always orders the Copper Caesar Salad with chicken, but also highly recommends the handmade apple fritters, which you can watch being prepared.

CALEDON HILLS BRUCE TRAIL CLUB RECOMMENDATIONS

Hockley General Store

994227 Mono Adjala Townline, Orangeville
Recommended by Sandy G., Club President
Sandy enjoys visiting the Hockley General Store as on a cold day, it provides

a cozy space for lunch or a snack after a hike or trail work, and during the summer, there is sheltered outdoor seating. Sandy enjoys strolling around the country-style store for food products, crafts, and gifts while she waits for her food to be prepared. Sandy's favourites include the Veggie Breakfast Bagel, Egg Salad Sandwich, or Grilled Cheese with a Blackberry Sapsucker (Organic Sparkling Tree Water) or chai latte. And she admits that she finds it hard to say no to one of the huge homemade cookies.

Coywolf Coffee

15586 McLaughlin Rd, Inglewood
Recommended by Mohammed S., Hike Leader

Mohammed enjoys going to Coywolf Coffee because of its atmosphere, great coffee and ideal location. Nestled in a pleasant neighbourhood with lush green surroundings, it's perfect for socializing and chatting. The café serves breakfast, baked goods, quiches, sandwiches, and a variety of hot and cold drinks. A short distance from the Bruce Trail, Cheltenham Badlands, and Caledon Trailway, it's a refreshing break from busy life.

Theatre Orangeville

87 Broadway, Orangeville
Recommended by Diane M., Club Fundraising Assistant
Diane encourages everyone to catch a live performance at Theatre Orangeville. Housed in a beautifully restored 1875 Opera House, this venue showcases professional Canadian plays, talks, and musicals in an intimate and historic setting. Plus, over the years, the Caledon Hills Bruce Trail Club has partnered with the Theatre as part of their Community Giveback Program.

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! •

Conservation in Action: New Protected Areas

Success in securing a continuous ribbon of wilderness along the Niagara Escarpment is achieved one hard-earned step at a time.

The generosity of donors, the cooperation of landowners and the dedication of volunteers and staff make it all possible. While this work continues year-round, we are proud to announce one of the latest success stories in recent months.

Greenrise Run – Blue Mountains Section

Map 22, Duntroon area

76 acres | 310 m of Bruce Trail Optimum Route

Greenrise Run is the newest protected natural area secured by the Bruce Trail Conservancy in the Blue Mountains section, located just north of Devil's Glen Provincial Park. It lies between two previously protected BTC properties: Avalon Meadow (secured in 2022) and Duntroon Crevice Heights (secured in 2014).

The property's namesake 'greenrise' is a small woodlot that runs at the Escarpment edge, threading between cultivated fields. This natural corridor serves as the route for 310 m of Bruce Trail and is home to a variety of native forest species, including a recently-spotted

porcupine. In addition to its forested ridge, Greenrise Run includes 62 acres of cultivated fields, which the BTC will lease to farmers to maintain their agricultural value for the community.

The Bruce Trail has traversed Greenrise Run for over 20 years thanks to a handshake agreement with the previous landowners.

In purchasing this property, the Bruce Trail Conservancy is not only protecting 76 acres of Niagara Escarpment habitat, it is also ensuring the Bruce Trail remains safely off-road, avoiding being routed onto Highway 124 and Concession 10 – both busy routes that can be particularly hazardous in winter. •



Porcupine



Song Sparrow



Greenrise Run – Blue Mountains Section

Photos in circles: Brian Popelier

Photo: Jacqueline Boland



Join the Adventure

Set sail on an extraordinary journey alongside local guides and experts on a small-ship expedition cruise. Explore the seldom-seen coastlines of the Arctic Canada, Greenland, North Atlantic Europe, and Newfoundland and Labrador—where adventure awaits at every turn.

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Trail Changes & Notices

MARCH - MAY 2025, 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

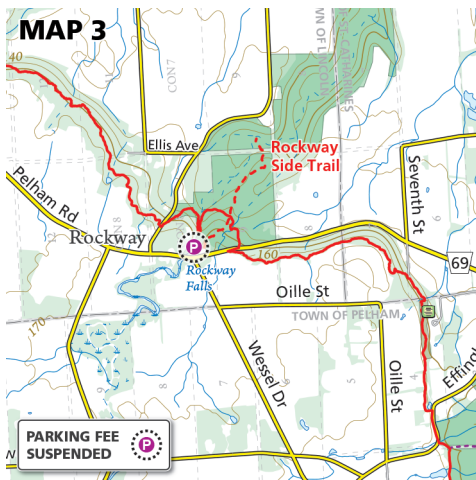
Visit brucetrail.org/trail_changes for the latest changes, searchable by Map Number, Club Section, and even by text in the description.

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

NIAGARA

Map 3 – Rockway Conservation Area, Parking Fees Suspended

Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority has suspended parking fees at Rockway Conservation Area for the 2025 season. For details visit: <https://npca.ca/parks-recreation/conservation-areas/rockway>



CALEDON HILLS

Map 16 – Meltwater Moraine reroute, new side trail and parking option

Following the successful securing of the Meltwater Moraine protected natural area by the BTC in early 2025, and thanks to significant work from Trail maintenance volunteers of the Caledon Hills Bruce Trail Club, 3.3 km of main Bruce Trail has been removed from the busy Airport Road and Escarpment Sideroad, a new side trail has been created, and a new parking option is available.

New Main Trail route (as shown on map) = 4.0 km

Paris Moraine Side Trail = 2.3 km

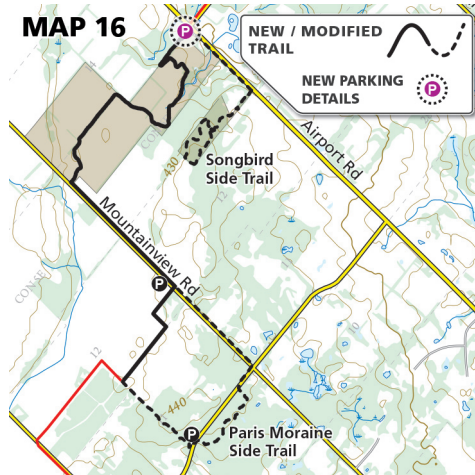
A new Paris Moraine Side Trail explores the distinctive topography of the Paris Moraine and creates a 3.1 km loop with the Main Trail.

Songbird Side Trail = 2.9 km roundtrip

The original Songbird Side Trail has been extended to encompass some of the former route of the Main Trail.

New Parking Option

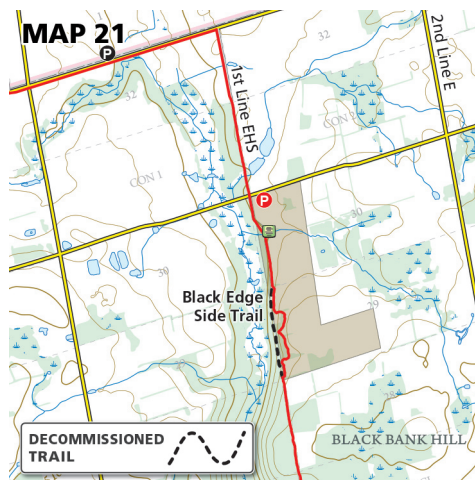
Room for 4 cars on the western shoulder of Airport Road where the Trail enters the Meltwater Moraine property, across from Finnerty Sideroad.



DUFFERIN HI-LAND

Map 21 – Black Edge Side Trail decommissioned

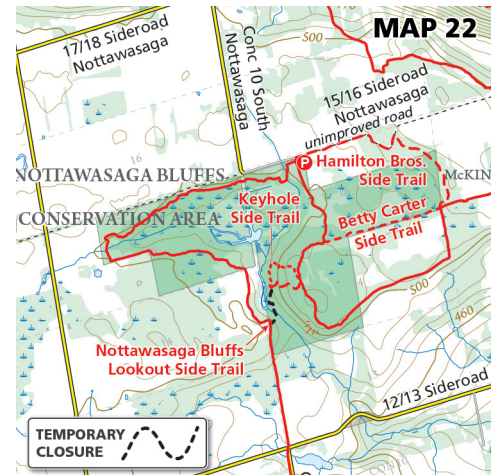
The Black Edge Side Trail has been decommissioned.



BLUE MOUNTAINS

Map 22 – Nottawasaga Bluffs Side Trail, temporary closure

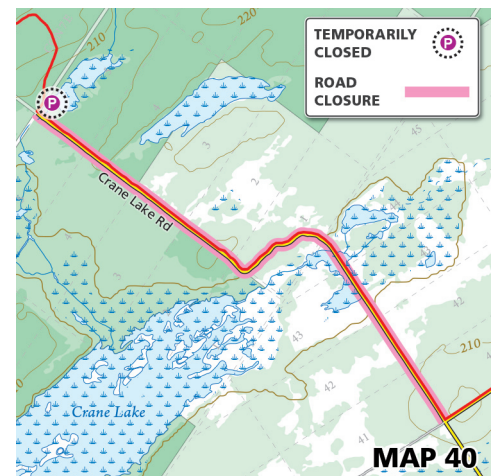
A section of the Nottawasaga Bluffs Lookout Side Trail, between the main Bruce Trail and the Keyhole Side Trail, is closed till further notice due to a bridge that has incurred winter damage and has been left impassable.



PENINSULA

Map 40 – 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: www.northbrucepeninsula.ca/government/roads-sidewalks/road-conditions-and-closures/



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 January 1 to March 31, 2025.

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Photo: Brian Popelier

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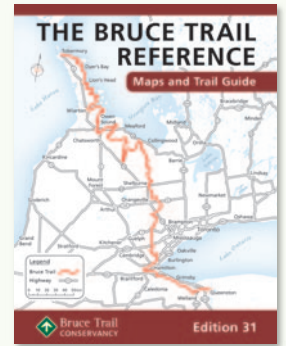


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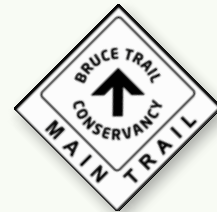
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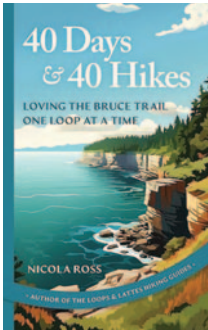


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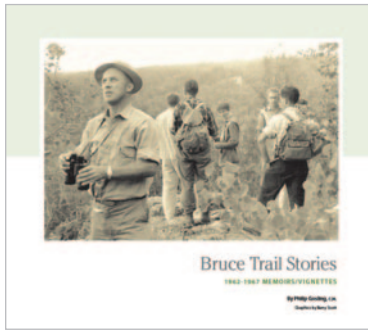
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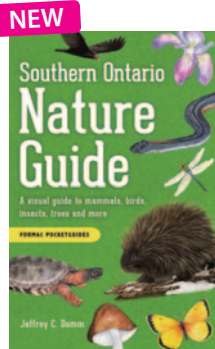
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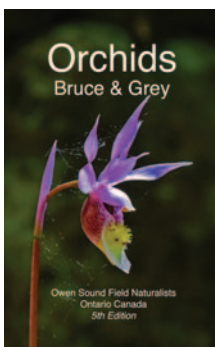
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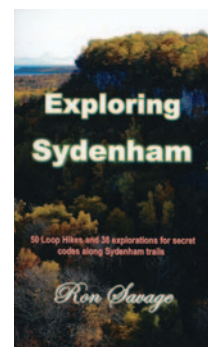
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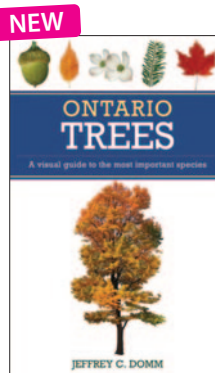
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Thank you to our incredible Trail Maintenance volunteers

On behalf of everyone who knows, loves and walks the Bruce Trail, our heartfelt thanks to the volunteers who worked tirelessly in the weeks following the March ice storm to clear the Trail in the Dufferin Hi-Land, Blue Mountains, Beaver Valley, Sydenham and Peninsula sections.

The devastation wrought by the storm was tackled carefully and steadily, with planning, coordination, persistence and technical skill. After making the difficult but necessary decision to close nearly half of the Bruce Trail to address the extraordinary damage, volunteers were able to clear hazards and re-open the Trail safely within six weeks.

We know the job is not over. As clean-up and repairs continue, thank you for all you do through your volunteer efforts to create a safe and enjoyable Bruce Trail experience for us all.



Photo: Jim Lewis



Photo: Rose Mary Mitter



Photo: Sydenham Bruce Trail Club



Photo: Sydenham Bruce Trail Club



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