

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF TREADWAY 1989-2009

BRUCE TRAIL

TREADWAY

OCTOBER 2010

UPDATES
EVENTS
IDEAS
NEWS

EDITOR

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The next time friends ask you why you spend so much time as a volunteer building and maintaining the Bruce Trail, invite them to **HIKE THE BRUCE TRAIL IN OCTOBER**



or any other time of the year for that matter. That's what 9 trail maintenance volunteers are doing. The answer to your friend's question is plain to see

It starts on a brisk October morning. The rising sun casts its spell over the surrounding hills and valleys, reflecting off leaves of red, yellow, orange and brown. A morning mist rises slowly. You wipe the dew off your car window and drive down a dirt road to the trail head. You enter the woods. There's a crunch beneath your feet as you shuffle through ankle-deep leaves. Everyone's complaining about the aches and pains from

yesterday's hike, all in good fun. Is it time to stop for lunch yet?

We pass a waterfall. There are so many. One section of trail that we've already hiked through boasts of over 100. We pass a vineyard, they're harvesting grapes. Further down the trail we pass acres of corn ready to be picked. Apple trees are everywhere. The ground is covered with the fallen fruit, once a staple to the early settlers these trees have long since been abandoned. A lilac bush crops up every now and then. I wonder who planted it.



There's an old homestead in the middle of a field. All that's left now is the foundation. What stories this building could tell. Empty churches and school houses abound; they remind us of the early days; some are brick and some are field stone. Many have been converted into homes.

We hike through small villages and towns. Sometimes we're hiking on the road. I for one enjoy this. It's a nice break. Some of the landscaping is beautiful. We pass a pub. We'll visit it tonight for a feast of fish, chips and beer.

We enter the woods again. There's an abandoned piece of farm machinery at the side of the trail. A tree grows through the centre of it; I guess it's been there for at least 80 years. We pass a rock wall; it must have taken a lifetime to accumulate that many rocks. On the left there's a split-rail fence covered with a rich green moss. I wonder how long it took to build it. There are cattle up ahead. We pass within a few feet of them. They couldn't care less. Some get a little restless. There's a stile in the middle of the wire fence that keeps them corralled. It seems that it was placed there for no apparent reason. No trail leads up to it or away from it. Then we notice a faded sign attached to one of its rungs. It reads; *this stile leads to nowhere; it has no purpose unless you're afraid of cows.*



Not all is wine and roses. It rains all night during one of our stays at the Northern Light Centre. The following morning the rain eases up a little. We decide to hike. All is well until around 10 o'clock. The skies open up. And down comes the rain in buckets. It doesn't let up until sun set. We're too far committed to turn back. Some of us hold up in a roadside barn while 5 of our group continue onward. They must reach the cars. Our 5 hikers are forced to cross streams that have turned into torrents. Finally they reach the cars and rescue our 4 stranded companions. We all arrive safely at the lodge and enjoy a home cooked meal of roast beef and potatoes. Afterwards, we enjoy a glass of wine in the lounge and read the news of the day. Some of the news is bad, some is good. The TSX is down 40 points but bank stocks are up.

On more pleasant days we dine out; lunch on a log or on a bench built by volunteers. What a nice gesture. There are so many great things that our

volunteers do. It's amazing how much work is done on the trail by so few; like the 900 metre long boardwalk; the steel spiral staircase up the rock face; the wooden steps that appear just when you think you can't take another step up a steep slope; the 27 bridges built in one section of the trail alone.

Nature does its part too. Like the cedar tree growing out of the side of a rock. Rock formations, 450 million years in the making; the awe-inspiring bucolic vistas that can be seen



from on top of Old Baldy; a bay the size of an ocean that's clearly visible from many vantage points along the trail. A gentle breeze just at the right time. A warm sun when you need it most. Does this help answer your friend's question?



In our next issue of Treadway, we'll be telling you about the demolition of the Sherman Falls bridge, built back in the '80's by our volunteers and how the Club plans to replace it.