

# CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF TREADWAY 1989-2009

BRUCE TRAIL

# TREADWAY

DECEMBER 2010

UPDATES  
EVENTS  
IDEAS  
NEWS

EDITOR

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## HOW DO YOU MOVE A 5-TON BOULDER?



Grimsby is a quaint little town located on the Niagara Peninsula. On a fall day, brightly coloured leaves are everywhere; the sun adds a dash of brilliance to the landscape; the air is crisp and clean; a creek trickles through the centre of town.

What could be more blissful; a hiking trail perhaps along side of this peaceful stream? Well it so happens that the Bruce Trail does just that. Perfect. Except for one thing, the escarpment is up to it's old tricks - shifting a little and sending tons of rock down the creek embankment (ever so gently) that hardly anyone notices until parts of the trail disappear. This has happened before.

This time however, our shifty escarpment has deposited a 5-ton boulder in the middle of our beloved trail. Hikers are making their way around it but the new pathway is not a safe route. The Trail Director and Project Coordinator investigate and along with the Trail Captain, they come up with a plan. Move the boulder. This crew has accomplished some spectacular feats over the years, but moving a 5-ton boulder! Why not go around it? Easier said than done given the terrain.

Twelve volunteers assemble at the worksite. The game plan is explained. Part of the work crew start digging around the gigantic rock, freeing it from mud and debris. Another part of the crew set up behind the rock and brace a 'bottle' jack up against an adjacent rock of equal size, inches away from the rock to be moved. Thankfully the boulder to be moved is on a slope downwards towards the creek bed. The jack when fully extended is about 10 inches in length. The operation commences; the jack is working. The boulder moves 2-3 inches at a time. When the jack is fully extended additional wood blocks are added to give the jack more leverage. About 3 hours later the crew has moved the rock 24 inches; it has come to rest against a tree stump. There is now safe passage between the obstructing rock and the anchor rock.

While this is going on, another part of the crew is filling in a cavity in the trail left behind by

another rock even larger than the one the crew is moving that has shifted down the embankment.

At the end of the day the crew has moved the obstructing boulder out of the way, created a safe passage way between two gigantic rocks; has repaired a deep cavity in the trail, smoothed over the treadway and has performed other minor repairs to the trail. Passing hikers marvel at the work and express their appreciation. Our volunteer trail maintenance crews will move mountains to help keep the trail safe and accessible...well they'll move 5-ton boulders anyway.

## **WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A LANDOWNER DECIDES HE DOESN'T WANT PUBLIC ACCESS TO HIS PROPERTY ANY LONGER?**



Bruce Trail Photos by Paul Beneteau

It has been part of the Bruce Trail for years but through no fault of the BT this club now must find a new route. This isn't the first time something like this has occurred. Unfortunately the BT sometimes must bear the brunt of a dispute between a landowner and a third party. The dispute sometimes goes unresolved and the BT must suffer the consequences. In this case the club must find a new route. Fortunately the adjacent property is owned by Conservation Halton and permission is granted to reroute the trail through Conservation property. The reroute however takes the trail through a section of land susceptible to poor drainage, which is probably why the trail wasn't located there in the first place. But now there's little choice.

Call in the troops. Our trail maintenance volunteers must once again use their ingenuity; build a 63-foot boardwalk that will keep hikers high and dry. Eighteen volunteers and 5 hours later the boardwalk is completed. Hikers can trek through as if nothing has ever happened. But a lot has happened, thanks to our volunteers.



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## *Silent Night*

