



Close to nature.
Close to home.

THE BRUCE TRAIL CONSERVANCY

Volunteer Orientation Manual

January 2012

“Like most volunteers I love hiking the Bruce Trail, so I donate my time to the BTC in order to try and pay back for this great enjoyment. I also want to think that I have been instrumental in helping to preserve the Trail for my four grandchildren so that they may also enjoy it.”

Cecile Dillon, Niagara BTC Representative

Table of Contents

Pledge Between the BTC and its Volunteers	1
1. The Bruce Trail Conservancy.....	2
2. Mission.....	3
3. Vision	3
4. Values.....	3
5. History.....	4
6. Land Acquisition.....	5
7. Fundraising at the BTC and YOU!	6
8. Volunteering.....	6
9. Volunteer Process.....	7
10. The Bruce Trail Clubs	7
11. Volunteer Positions	8
12. Volunteer Awards.....	9
13. Insurance and Liability	9
14. Related Associations	11
15. Government Relations	11

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed it’s the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead.

Pledge Between the BTC and its Volunteers

The contribution of volunteers is critical to the fulfilment of the Bruce Trail Conservancy's mission and the achievement of its objectives. The following sets out the BTC's pledge to its volunteers and the expectations of the volunteers to the BTC.

BTC Pledge to its Volunteers

- The BTC will provide training and mentoring for its volunteers.
- BTC Policies and Procedures, in printed, electronic or online format (at the volunteer's option) will be available to all volunteers.
- Volunteers will have access to all information relevant to and necessary for them to complete the tasks for which they volunteer.
- The BTC will engage its volunteers in meaningful dialogue, through its Committees and Clubs, on all matters relevant to the volunteers.
- Volunteers of the BTC are covered by the BTC liability insurance policy for any suits or claims brought against them arising out of their duties on behalf of the BTC.

The Volunteer's Pledge to the BTC

As a volunteer with the Bruce Trail Conservancy, I will:

- Support the BTC's Charter Objectives and Mission
- Abide by the BTC Policies and Procedures provided to me
- Partake in BTC training relevant for my role(s)
- Complete the tasks for which I volunteer, in a timely manner and to the best of my ability
- Hold in confidence all confidential BTC information that I acquire including information related to BTC finances, members, donors, landowners, property acquisition, staff and other volunteers
- Accept and abide by decisions arrived at through consensus or vote by the BTC Board and BTC Committees and my Club's Board and Committees, and communicated to me

1. The Bruce Trail Conservancy

The Bruce Trail Conservancy is one of Canada's most respected conservation groups. The BTC was formed to act as a guiding body for the planning, building and management of the Trail. The BTC now partners with the Ontario Government, the various Conservation Authorities along the Escarpment, the Ontario Heritage Trust, private landowners and many other groups to promote conservation of the Niagara Escarpment. Hiking is an important activity of the BTC members, and an important way of engendering support for our organization's goals of acquiring land along the Niagara Escarpment for its permanent protection.

The Conservancy and its membership are committed to the preservation of the Niagara Escarpment and to the securement of the Bruce Trail on public land. There are currently 8400 members of the BTC and approximately 1000 active volunteers who contribute an estimated 104,385 hours of work per year. This represents about \$2,272,461 worth of volunteer labour. Every aspect of the Conservancy and Club activities involve volunteers: from organizing and leading hikes, to trail maintenance, club newsletters, Club and Conservancy Boards of Directors, committees, keeping in touch with landowners over whose properties the Trail crosses, land acquisition and many more.

The effectiveness of the volunteer systems is substantially advanced through help provided by the professional staff located at Head Office within the Royal Botanical Gardens in Hamilton. Currently, there are 15 staff:

- Executive Director
- Executive Assistant
- Office Administrators (three)
- Director of Marketing
- Director of Volunteer Programs
- Director of Land Securement
- Director of Fundraising
- Donor Stewardship Coordinator
- Cartographer
- Land Stewardship Coordinator
- Conservation Stewardship Officer
- Membership Coordinator
- Accountant

The Bruce Trail is the oldest and longest continuous footpath in Canada. It runs along the Niagara Escarpment from Niagara to Tobermory, spanning almost 900 km of main trail and 250 km of side trails.

Every year, 400,000 visits are made to the Trail as people walk, cross country-ski, snowshoe, watch wildlife, take photographs and admire the glorious scenery

of the Escarpment. By providing an opportunity to explore the Escarpment, the Trail has helped increase awareness of the uniqueness and rich diversity of this landform. The Bruce Trail was instrumental in the Escarpment being named a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve by the United Nations in 1990 - one of only fifteen such reserves in all of Canada.

Today 47% of the Bruce Trail is secure and safe from development. However, 53% of the Bruce Trail corridor is vulnerable. The Bruce Trail Conservancy is committed to securing the corridor in its entirety.

A Board of Directors governs the BTC and volunteers from 9 Bruce Trail Clubs are responsible for maintaining, stewarding and promoting the Trail.

2. Mission

The Bruce Trail Conservancy is a charitable organization committed to establishing a conservation corridor containing a public footpath along the Niagara Escarpment, in order to protect its natural ecosystems and to promote environmentally responsible public access to this UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve.

3. Vision

The Bruce Trail Conservancy and its partners will secure a conservation corridor along the entire Niagara Escarpment that contains the Bruce Trail. Our steadfast commitment to responsible land stewardship will significantly contribute to the preservation and enhancement of the Escarpment ecosystem.

4. Values

The Bruce Trail Conservancy Values:

- Our public and private landholders who partner with us to offer public access to the conservation corridor.
- Our dedicated regional Bruce Trail Conservancy Clubs who maintain the trails and manage the lands under our care.
- The donors, landowners and public agencies who partner with us to continually expand the conserved lands along the Niagara Escarpment.
- The dedication, time and support of our large base of volunteers and members, and of our staff.
- The restoration and stewardship of the lands under our care.
- The responsible use of the trails for public safety and for minimal environmental impact.

- Our role in providing educational resources and opportunities about the Niagara Escarpment.
- Our role in providing national and international expertise in land stewardship and trail management.
- Our role in Niagara Escarpment ecosystem management and research.
- Our collaboration with like-minded BTC partners which produces measurable benefits toward the achievement of our mission and vision.

5. History

1960 Ray Lowes provided the vision for the Bruce Trail. He presented the idea for the Trail to the Federation of Ontario Naturalists. The four founders of the Bruce Trail were Norman Pearson, Philip Gosling, Robert McLaren and Ray Lowes.

1963 On March 13 the Bruce Trail Conservancy was incorporated.

1967 The Bruce Trail was completed, making it the oldest long distance footpath in Canada.

1967-1977 A period of growth and development for the Bruce Trail, memberships grew from 60 to 7500. Eleven local Bruce Trail Clubs were created (later reduced to nine). Campsites were added and more people started to enjoy hiking on the Niagara Escarpment

1971 The Niagara Escarpment Preservation Fund was established by the BTC to raise funds specifically for land acquisition.

1980 The BTC hired its first full-time staff person.

1985 The Niagara Escarpment Plan is approved by the Ontario Government.

1990 The United Nations proclaimed the Niagara Escarpment to be a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve.

1992 The BTC was awarded the Canadian Environmental Achievement Award and is presented a Certificate of Honour.

1993 The Annual Campaign was initiated to raise funds for securing the Trail.

1995 The BTC received the Lieutenant Governor's Conservation Award, sponsored by the Conservation Council of Ontario.

1996 The BTC inaugurated the Planned Giving Program to accept bequests.

1998 The Land Stewardship Program was initiated.

2002 The BTC received the Niagara Escarpment Achievement Award for the Devil's Monument Lookout Project.

2002 The BTC was the Provincial and National award winner in the Natural Outdoor Site category from Attractions Canada.

2004 The BTC was presented with the Partnership Award of Excellence from Conservation Halton for property securement.

2005 An updated mission statement was created for the BTC

2005 The Niagara Escarpment Ecological Land Acquisition Program (NEELAP) gave the BTC the administration duties over \$850,000 for property securement on behalf of the Ministry of Natural Resources.

2006 The Trail went digital; a full GPS was done of the Trail and GIS technology was used for all mapping.

2007 The Bruce Trail Association changed its name to the Bruce Trail Conservancy

6. Land Acquisition

Securing a permanent route for the Bruce Trail, linking parks and natural features, is a long-term objective of the BTC. The acquisition of a permanent and secure corridor for the Bruce Trail will have lasting benefits for educational use and scientific research while preserving an important part of the priceless legacy of the Niagara Escarpment.

Why do we try to purchase land outright? Even though in the past we have had friendly relations with many of the landowners on the Trail, we have to look to the future. If the landowner dies or sells and moves away and is replaced by a non-friendly owner, then we have to relocate the Trail to the road. Also, in the case of private property lands, we have no control over development that may occur adjacent to the Trail, spoiling the view and the hiking experience. We need to acquire the appropriate corridor in order to protect the Trail's environs. Purchasing property is the BTC's last resort. We can acquire title through donations, either with a transfer of full title or a set of rights such as an easement. A conservation easement or right of way can also secure the Trail.

Some obstacles to securing the Trail are:

- Lack of money (both public and private)
- The general public incorrectly views the Trail as provided free by some level of government or another organization

- The Trail is taken for granted as a feature that has always been there
- BTC membership is generally unaware of the Bruce Trail Conservancy's mandate
- Many members think the Trail is already secure
- Lack of information about all of the options landowners can use to secure land for the trail

Where the money comes from:

- Membership dues
- Donations by corporations and individuals
- Profits from the sale of guidebooks, calendars and other merchandise
- Government grants
- Bequests and insurance policies

7. Fundraising at the BTC and YOU!

As a volunteer for the BTC, you play an important role in our fundraising program by sharing the message of the work and mission of the organization.

You are our best promoters, as you are involved and can inspire others to become members or donors and support the vital work we do! Even more, our volunteers are often donors themselves and we are grateful for that as well. Every year, the BTC raises funds to purchase necessary Niagara Escarpment property along the Optimum Route of the Trail, and to steward that land and the Trail in perpetuity. Over the past few years, that work has resulted in over \$1 million dollars raised annually, thanks to our generous members and donors.

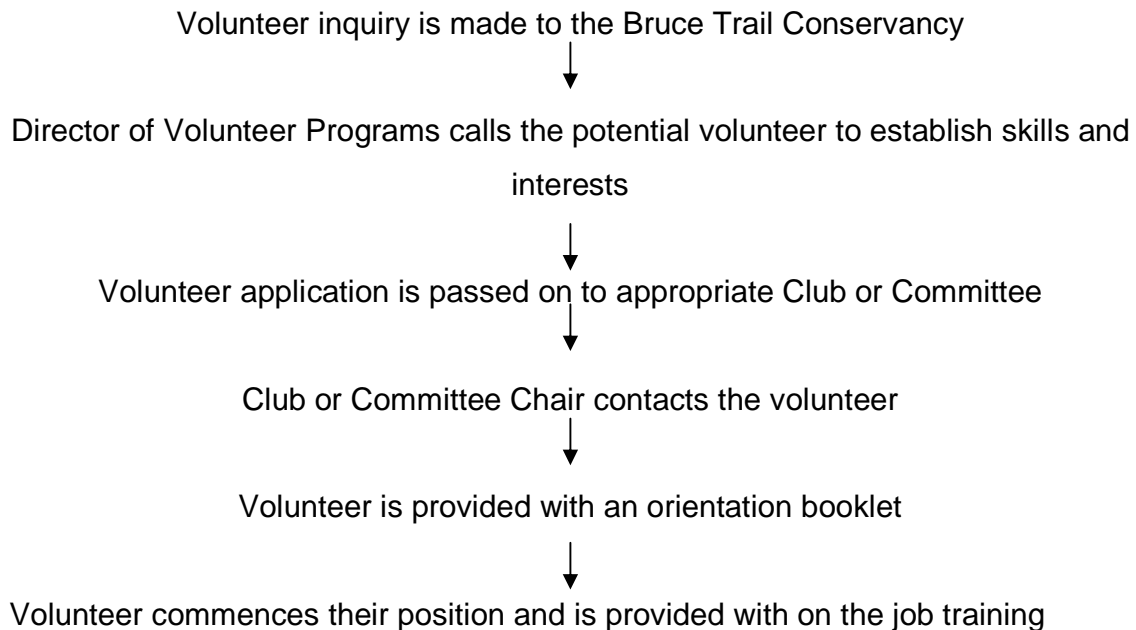
Our nine BTC Clubs also work hard to raise funds for their Clubs and for the BTC by holding special events and undertaking projects such as selling Christmas Trees. Their support of the BTC's fundraising endeavours is greatly appreciated.

8. Volunteering

Since 1963 volunteers have been the driving force behind the Bruce Trail. The Bruce Trail Conservancy is responsible for maintaining the Trail and keeping its structures safe and accessible. Volunteers are an integral part of this task and are responsible for contacting landowners, marking the route, ongoing trail maintenance, planning hikes in their communities, promoting the Trail and performing a variety of other roles.

From its inception, volunteers have provided the time, commitment and dedication to build the Bruce Trail. When volunteers give time and energy to work in any volunteer position for the Bruce Trail Conservancy, they are helping to achieve one of our most important objectives, to build, steward and maintain the Bruce Trail and its side trails. Without volunteers, we would not have the Bruce Trail to enjoy and this natural beauty would be lost.

9. Volunteer Process



10. The Bruce Trail Clubs

There are nine regional Clubs:

- Niagara, Queenston to Grimsby
- Iroquoia, Grimsby to Kelso
- Toronto, Kelso to Cheltenham
- Caledon Hills, Cheltenham to Mono Centre
- Dufferin Hi-Land, Mono Centre to Lavender
- Blue Mountains, Lavender to Craigleith
- Beaver Valley, Craigleith to Blantyre
- Sydenham, Blantyre to Wiarton
- Peninsula, Wiarton to Tobermory

Originally the Clubs were formed as part of the planning and construction of the Bruce Trail; they were responsible for locating, designing, creating and building their section of the Trail.

Today, each Club is responsible for maintaining its section of the Trail. The Clubs have a number of responsibilities to perform, under the general direction of the BTC. Each of the nine Clubs has a Board of Directors, with representation on the BTC's Board of Directors. Trail maintenance is the responsibility of the Clubs, with re-routes being approved by the BTC Trail Director. Clubs may lead organized hikes and most publish a newsletter for their members to keep them informed about recent developments, reroutes and upcoming events. Fundraising and Public Relations are conducted at both the

Club level and at the BTC. The Clubs handle landowner relations and negotiations because volunteers are local and know the property owners.

Since 1985, the Bruce Trail Clubs have played key parts in the Niagara Escarpment Land Acquisition Project. Club volunteers have the knowledge of local land ownership and the community sensitivities that are so important to securing a permanent corridor for the Bruce Trail.

11. Volunteer Positions

A. BTC Committees

- By-Laws Committee
- Club Communications Committee
- Environment Committee
- Finance Committee
- Fundraising Committee
- Human Resources Committee
- Land Securement Secretariat
- Land Stewardship Committee
- Landowner Relations Committee
- Nominating Committee
- Policy Advisory Council
- Program Management Council
- Risk Management Committee
- Steering and Strategic Planning Committee
- Trail Development and Maintenance Committee

B. BTC Positions

- BTC Representative to an allied association
- BTC Archivist
- BTC Board Member
- BTC Office Volunteer
- BTC Trail Director
- President
- Executive Vice President
- Vice President of Programs
- Secretary
- Treasurer

C. Club Positions

- Archivist
- Director from Club to the BTC Board
- Director at Large
- Hike Leader
- Land Steward
- Land Steward Director
- Landowner Relations Director
- Membership Coordinator
- Newsletter/Publications Director
- President
- Public Relations/Publicity Director
- Secretary
- Social Convenor
- Trail Captain
- Trail Coordinator
- Trail Director
- Trail Maintenance
- Treasurer
- Vice President
- Volunteer Coordinator

12. Volunteer Awards

This is a list of all the volunteer awards available through the BTC for Volunteers. For more information about the awards you can contact the BTC Head Office or your Club Volunteer Coordinator.

1. Honorary Membership – nomination date May 31
2. Tom East Award – nomination date July 1
3. Susan Oleskevich Award – nomination date Aug 15
4. Lloyd Smith Walking Stick – tabulated at AGM
5. George Willis Family Trophy – tabulated at AGM
6. Office Volunteer Award – nomination date Nov 1
7. Volunteers of the Year Award – nomination date May 31
8. Conservancy Volunteer Awards – tabulated yearly
9. Calypso Orchid Environmental Award – nomination date June 1
10. Philip and Jean Gosling Award – nomination date July 1

13. Insurance and Liability

Volunteers are not covered under the Worker's Compensation Act. If they are injured while volunteering, they must use their OHIP or personal insurance coverage. If volunteers are injured and want compensation, they will have to claim against the BTC and show negligence on the part of the Conservancy in order to receive money for damages.

If volunteers themselves are sued for negligence for an action that occurred while they were acting under the direction of the BTC, i.e. a bridge that they built collapsed resulting in an injury, they are covered by the BTC insurance. Their lawyer's fees and any damages will be covered.

If volunteers are using their cars for BTC business and are involved in an accident, the laws of Ontario dictate that their own insurance policy must respond first to the claim if they are sued for damages and injuries. If the amount of the Claim exceeds their personal insurance amount, the BTC insurance policy will cover the remaining funds, if the BTC is brought into the suit for damages.

The issue of liability is based on the principle that people are responsible for their conduct in the course of daily activities. Failure to conduct oneself in a responsible and reasonable manner could result in a tort.

A tort is a civil wrong as opposed to a criminal wrong and occurs when negligent conduct results in some injury to others. Negligent conduct can include acts of commission or omission. The resulting damage might be to either person or property.

Liability

Vicarious Liability

- An organization may be held vicariously liable for its volunteers and others providing gratuitous services, if their duties are carried out under the organization's direction and control.

Negligence

- In law, an action is negligent if a reasonable person should have acted differently under the circumstances. Negligence is a matter of civil not criminal law. In civil law it is the client or the family of the client who is alleging wrongdoing. In these cases people hire their own lawyers.

Duty of Care

- This is a legal responsibility to care for the safety and well being of the injured party.

Breach of Duty

- This is a failure to fulfill the duty of care.

Standard of Care

- Actions will be measured against the standard of care throughout the course of the investigation. Volunteers are not held to the standard of care of fully qualified staff, but rather to that of a reasonable volunteer in the circumstances. However, volunteers should be competent to perform their assigned duties and have greater knowledge and skills than ordinary lay people. They should also be trained to know their own limits and when it is appropriate to seek assistance from more qualified staff.

Negligence coverage for BTC volunteers includes:

- All activities conducted by or on behalf of the BTC.
- All premises owned maintained or occupied by the BTC.
- In a case of negligence, coverage for negligent acts only. If an injury occurs but the BTC is not deemed to be negligent, then the policy does not pay.
- Legal Fees are covered to defend a suit brought against the BTC where coverage is applicable. Fees are covered whether the suit is groundless or not.
- Associated Clubs of the BTC are not covered as individual insureds as they are not legal entities. Club activities are covered if they are under BTC sponsorship or approval, either implicitly or explicitly.
- Special Damages and General Damages are covered by the policy, but Punitive Damages and Intentional Injury are excluded.
- Independent hikes are not covered unless they are sponsored by the BTC.

- Directors, Officers, Volunteers, Members and employers of the BTC are covered by the BTC liability insurance policy for any suits or claims brought against them arising out of their duties on behalf of the BTC.

14. Related Associations

The BTC has a representative at two Associations to ensure that the interests of the BTC are adequately recognized, promoted, accommodated and protected in the operations of that Association. The representative also reports regularly to the BTC on any decisions, actions or recommendations made by that Association or its members on the plans and operations of that Association, particularly as they relate to the interests of the BTC, alerting the BTC to action items requiring immediate attention. These Associations include:

- Hike Ontario www.hikeontario.com
- Bruce Peninsula/Fathom Five National Parks Management Planning Advisory Committee www.pc.gc.ca/pn-np/on/bruce/index_e.asp

15. Government Relations

In 1973 the province passed the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act (NEPDA). The purpose of this legislation was: “to provide for the maintenance of the Niagara Escarpment and the land in its vicinity substantially as a continuous natural environment and to ensure only such development occurs as is compatible with that natural environment”.

To implement the NEPDA, the province established the Niagara Escarpment Commission, whose job was to develop an environmental land use plan for the Escarpment and to control development along the Escarpment via development permits.

Areas of government which impact the BTC are:

- Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR)
- The Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC)
- The Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Spaces System (NEPOSS)
- Ontario Heritage Trust (OHT)
- Conservation Authorities on the Escarpment
- Local Municipalities