

By Marie Knapp

Why I love the Bruce Trail

Have you noticed that as soon as you start on a hiking trail, as soon as your feet begin to feel the soft earth beneath them and your eyes spot the colours around you and you smell the freshness of the air, that you begin to feel really good inside? Have you noticed how your vitality begins to pick up, as your heart beats a little faster, your lungs breathe more fully and all your cells feel the improved nourishment from your enhanced circulation? That's why I love the Bruce Trail.

Have you noticed how as your body balances with the ups and downs, the twists of the trail brings your attention to the moment? Your brain pathways become more accustomed to the unevenness as you practice your skills in body awareness. A variety of muscles contract and relax in different combinations with different steps, keeping you stronger and more agile. That is why I love the Bruce Trail.

Have you noticed how walking through the trees helps you clear the heaviness you may feel in your emotional body? Worry, anger, jealousy or other heaviness you may feel in your gut, or heart, or across the shoulders begins to move through you as if you are walking it out. Sometimes you feel as though with each step, as the sole of your foot touches the earth, the earth draws the feelings out and relieves you

of these anxieties. That is why I love the Bruce Trail.

Have you noticed how your brain begins to clear as you breathe in the freshness of the seasons. It feels as though each exhale helps you let go of more of the mind chatter that persists when you are at work or home or driving. The mind gradually lets go of the troubling thoughts that were not solving anything and allows a clarity of "what is important anyways" to begin to rise within. As your brain clears, you leave room for new perspectives and it feels really good. That is why I love the Bruce Trail.

Have you noticed the awe you feel in some places that seem to have a richness in sensual experiences? You are grateful and connected to life. It feels uplifting, inspiring, and any emptiness begins to feel replenished. I love to

stand at the lookout over Colpoy's Bay near Purple Valley, or feel the sense of wonder walking through the palisades near Harrison Park, or breathe in the vistas at Hope Bay and Lion's Head. I love the cross country skiing through Bayview Forest and the autumn colours walking the trail in the Beaver Valley. I love the purple violets and trilliums and leeks and dog toothed violets everywhere in the spring. I love the peace I feel hiking the loops at Jones Falls, and up the West Rocks. That is why I love the Bruce Trail.

I don't know of any place that offers such a holistic hiking experience that is so easy to get to, so inexpensive, and so replenishing. I hope to see you on the trail soon. And when I do, just smile and say "Yes, I know what you mean". That is why I love the Bruce Trail. •