

SPRING 2024



## *President's Message*

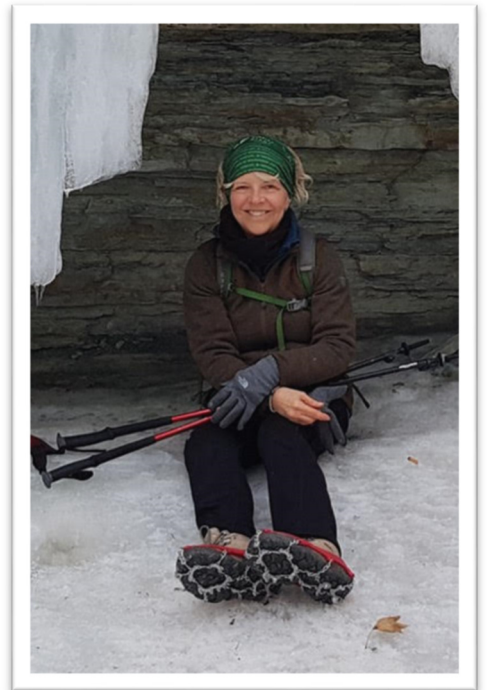
**Janet Davey**

Thank you to everyone who came out for the New Year's Day President's hikes. It was wonderful to see so many new and familiar faces. There was a great turnout for the hikes and as usual, the treats afterwards were plentiful and delicious!

Once again, it has been a busy year for the Niagara Bruce Trail Club. Please plan to join us on April 27th for our Annual General Meeting to hear more about what has been accomplished, vote for the board nominees, celebrate our volunteer award winners, and connect with friends you haven't seen in a while. We are moving inside this year! You'll be receiving more details about the event in the next few weeks.

There are many opportunities to get involved and volunteer with our club. If you would like to make 2024 the year you get involved, please see page 3 for volunteer positions with the NBTC Board.

Happy Hiking!"



### SAVE THE DATE!

NBTC Annual General Meeting will be Saturday, April 27, 2024. Location to be confirmed. More details coming soon.

*Our Mission: Preserving a ribbon of wilderness, for everyone, forever.*

## 2023-2024 NBTC Board of Directors

- PRESIDENT  
Janet Davey
- VICE-PRESIDENT  
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- CLUB SECRETARY  
Marion Hanover
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- LANDOWNER RELATIONS DIRECTOR  
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- LAND ACQUISITION DIRECTOR  
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Tammy Morris

### BOARD SUPPORT

- NBTC Website: Tammy Morris
- Social Convenor:  
Sharon Summerhayes
- Social Media:  
Cathy Berkhout-Bosse

**NIAGARA BRUCE TRAIL CLUB**  
P.O. Box 23021  
St. Catharines RPO Carlton, ON  
L2R 7P6

### EMAIL

[niagarabrucetrailclub@gmail.com](mailto:niagarabrucetrailclub@gmail.com)

### WEBSITE

[www.niagarabrucetrail.club](http://www.niagarabrucetrail.club)

### FACEBOOK

Niagara Bruce Trail Club

### TWITTER

@BTCNiagara1

### INSTAGRAM

@niagarabrucetrailclub



# Niagara Bruce Trail Club

## Volunteer Awards 2024

*Since 1963 volunteers have been the driving force behind the Bruce Trail. Volunteers assume many different roles. Some are responsible for contacting landowners, for marking the route, or for ongoing trail maintenance. Others plan hikes in their communities, promote the trail at events, or simply help as needed in occasional activities. Today, more than 1,500 volunteers support the work of the Bruce Trail Conservancy, serving as caretakers of the Bruce Trail. NBTC is proud to offer three Awards to recognize volunteer contributions.*

- **NBTC Lifetime Achievement Award**  
Awarded annually to a member(s) who has made a significant volunteer contribution to the organization at the club level over many years.
- **NBTC Volunteer of the Year Award**  
Awarded annually to a member or committee whose volunteerism has gone above and beyond in the year just completed.
- **NBTC Unsung Hero Award**  
Awarded annually to a member(s) who can always be counted on to lend a hand and volunteer at the club level over many years.

### ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- ✓ Demonstrates exceptional commitment, skills, or leadership.
- ✓ Is a member in good standing of the Bruce Trail Conservancy, Niagara Club.
- ✓ Has not received remuneration for their time and effort.
- ✓ Fulfils the role of volunteer with enthusiasm.
- ✓ Strives to go above and beyond their expected voluntary position or role.
- ✓ Champions the mission and vision of the Bruce Trail Conservancy.
- ✓ Has not received this award previously.

### NOMINATION PROCESS:

Nominations can be made by any current NBTC member by submitting a nomination letter of 150-250 words outlining why the nominee should be considered for this award to [niagarabrucetrailclub@gmail.com](mailto:niagarabrucetrailclub@gmail.com) by **February 29, 2024**. The letter should include information about the effort and contribution of the nominee. Include name, description of skills, commitment, and contribution, and explain why this nominee is deserving. The NBTC board will vote for the recipient.

### AWARD PRESENTATION:

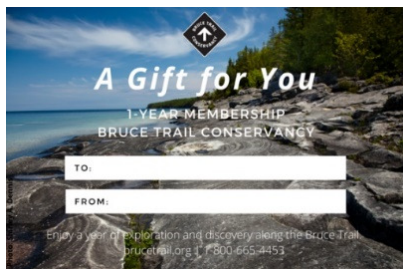
The award will be a plaque with NBTC logo, award name, recipient(s) name, and photo to be presented at the Club AGM. ◀

## NBTC Volunteer Opportunities

*We have additional opportunities for those interested in getting more involved.*

To apply for these positions, please contact **Jessica Ranalli** at [nbtc4membership@gmail.com](mailto:nbtc4membership@gmail.com) or you can apply online at <https://brucetrail.org/apply-online-to-volunteer/>

- **Land Stewardship Director:** The Land Stewardship Director is responsible for the regular care and maintenance of BTC properties located within the jurisdiction of the Niagara Club in accordance with the BTC Land Stewardship policies and procedures. They are responsible for the recruitment, training, and development of Land Stewards and represent the Niagara Bruce Trail Club at the Bruce Trail Conservancy's Land Stewardship meetings.
- **Director at Large:** The Director at Large takes part in ad-hoc or recurring committees or special projects on a regular basis. Ideally, this person will also train to eventually take over another board role when a board member retires.
- **AGM Planning Committee Volunteers:** The AGM planning committee is looking for two or three volunteers to be part of the planning for the club's Annual General Meeting. The planning is already underway for this year's meeting, so the time commitment is not too onerous. Most meetings will be held through Zoom.
- **Logistics & Supplies Coordinator:** You may have noticed our tent, posters, signs, merchandise, etc., at several events. It takes coordination and physical labour to move all these items to various locations so we're looking for one or two individuals to assist our Media Relations team with this task. You would assist in transporting and setting up these items at the various events the club participates in throughout the year. This is a great way to meet people.
- **Landowner Ambassadors:** Our Landowner Ambassadors help us to maintain relationships with our local landowners. We are looking for personable, friendly people who can connect with our landowners along the trail. Your interaction with landowners includes delivering tokens of appreciation and dealing with issues/concerns that may arise.



You will receive a charitable donation tax receipt for the full amount of the gift membership.

To order a gift membership, see <https://brucetrail.org/become-a-member/#gift-a-membership> ◀

## HIKE IN STYLE THIS SPRING



- Men's & Ladies Long-sleeve, wick-away T-shirts \$30
- Tube Scarves \$15
- Bumper Stickers \$5

To order, see <http://niagarabrucetrail.club/wp/nbtcmerchandise/>



*NBTC merchandise will be available at our event hikes, social events, and our AGM.*

# Trail Maintenance

**RICK WATERS**

TRAIL MAINTENANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

Rob Stevens clearing trees on the main Bruce Trail between Brock University and DeCew House



Photos: above, Vince at Rockway CA, and below, Vince on the main Bruce Trail near Park Rd Grimsby

Vince Zvonar clearing a tree on the main Bruce Trail near Russ Rd in Grimsby





Rob Stevens clearing a tree on the Wetland Ridge Side Trail



Rob Stevens at Louth Conservation clearing the main Bruce Trail



## Apps on the Trail

### A BRUCE TRAIL CONSERVANCY WEBINAR

March 14, 2024, 12:00pm

To register:

<https://brucetrail.org/apps-on-the-trail-mar-14-2024/>

Whether you want to identify local flora and fauna, hike with added safety, or simply make the most of your trail adventure, mobile apps can enhance your Bruce Trail hiking experience. In this session, BTC Communications Coordinator Brooke Henry will highlight apps such as iNaturalist, Seek, Merlin, what3words, and share the latest features of the Bruce Trail App.

**Presenter:** Brooke Henry has been with the Bruce Trail Conservancy since 2018, most recently as Communications Coordinator. Since 2022, Brooke has been a World Trails Ambassador with the World Trails Network, allowing her to connect with trail enthusiasts and professionals from around the world. She is an avid hiker and often uses apps while exploring trails in Ontario and abroad.

**Your Registration Confirmation:** Since this webinar is for BTC members only, your registration confirmation and Zoom webinar link will be sent after your membership has been verified. Please allow two business days for this. Once your membership is verified, you'll receive an email confirmation from Bruce Trail Conservancy via [no-reply@zoom.us](mailto:no-reply@zoom.us).

Please check your "Junk" or "Spam" email filters for confirmation emails from the Bruce Trail Conservancy via [no-reply@zoom.us](mailto:no-reply@zoom.us). ◀

# Exploring Nature in the Winter

Submitted by Helen Hermansen

Some of the things that we can see in the winter may be observed all year round...though our attention is focussed on the spring flowers or fall colours...and we might just overlook some other amazing elements of the forest. So, as we pause to admire the magical beauty of the freshly fallen snow, let's take a closer look at one of the hardy and intriguing ferns...the marginal wood fern, *Dryopteris marginalis*.



One hint to correctly identifying this plant is to look at your surrounding habitat. Marginal wood ferns can be found growing on rocky areas, slopes and ravines in the forest, and along wooded streams. So, it is right at home on the forested escarpment in Louth Conservation Area. Next, we have the unusual observation that this fern remains green and leathery in the middle of winter: it's evergreen!

Two other features help us to ID the marginal wood fern. Firstly, it does not spread underground, but instead will grow in a nice tidy clump. And finally, it has little round dots (called sori) on the bottom of the fronds located along the margin (yes along the margin, just like in the name). Check a few of the fronds because there are fertile ones with the sori and sterile fronds without.

So, why do we never see ferns in bloom? Well, the fern family of plants has been around for hundreds of millions of years – even before dinosaurs – and that's long before cones, seeds, or flowers were even invented. Instead, they reproduce sexually by tiny spores (originating in the sori) and some can spread vegetatively using their stems or leaves. So, sori, there's no flowers! Instead, we can admire the delicate new fiddleheads as they unfurl in the spring. In case you were wondering.... DO NOT eat them!!

Now that you know the marginal wood fern, keep exploring the winter landscape and you may find two other evergreen ferns: the Christmas Fern and the Walking Fern.

For fern identification, check out the Ontario Ferns Website, which also includes a guide to fern silhouettes, like the one above:

<http://ontarioferns.com> ◀



## NBTC Hiking 101

### Spring 2024

Hiking 101 is an introductory course for novice hikers, members, and non-members alike. If you want some guidance on where to begin, what to wear, and what to take along, this is the course for you. The course is three Sunday afternoon sessions with a combination of workshop with Q&A followed by short hikes along the trail. Dress in weather appropriate clothing and wear good walking shoes.

**Hike Leader(s):** Lauren Doig

#### Location

- April 28: Kinsmen Park, Frost Rd, Beamsville
- May 5: Louth Conservation Area
- May 26: Queenston Heights
- **Time:** 1:00pm – 3:00pm
- **Pace:** Leisurely
- **Terrain:** Moderate
- **Distance:** 5-6 km

**Registration is required.**

#### Registration Fee:

- Members: \$30.00
- Non-Members: \$40.00

Spaces are limited.

To register, see:

<https://hikes.brucetrail.org/event/hiking-101april-28-may-5-may-26-2024/2024-04-28/>

Upon completing the three sessions, you will receive a **Free Event Tube Scarf** (\$15 value).



## THE BRUCE TRAIL USERS' CODE

<https://brucetrail.org/exploration-the-trail/#trail-users-code>

1. Hike only along marked routes. Do not take short cuts.
2. Do not climb fences. Use the stiles.
3. Respect the privacy of people living along the trail.
4. Leave the Trail cleaner than you found it. Carry out all litter.
5. No open fires are allowed on the Trail. Use a portable stove.
6. Camp only at designated camp sites.
7. Leave flowers and plants for other to enjoy.
8. Do not damage live trees or strip off bark.
9. Keep dogs on a leash and under control at all times.
10. Do not disturb wildlife.
11. Leave only your thanks and take nothing but photographs.
12. Obey all signs.



## Tips for Hiking in Mud Season

Submitted by Ellen Savoia

It's amazing to be able to hike all year and especially here in Niagara where we have many days, even in winter, when conditions are like spring. While hiking in the spring conditions can be amazing, it also can have a negative impact on the trail. Sidestepping around mud and water widens the trail reducing soil fertility, damaging early spring plants. The widening of the trail can also lead to erosion, especially on slopes, creating hazards and costly trail repair. Keeping to the centre of the trail even if it means walking through mud and water will minimize environmental damage. Here are a few tips to have a low impact hike:

- Wear waterproof boots with good treads. If your boots aren't waterproof line them with plastic bags. Walk through mud and stick to the centre of the trail, walking on rocks when possible.
- Wear gators to keep your legs dry and help keep water out of your boots.
- Bring hiking poles as they can help when walking through slippery mud.
- If the trail is extremely muddy try paved, gravel or limestone trails until the conditions dry out.

To learn more about on how reduce environmental impacts while enjoying the outdoors visit Leave No Trace. <https://leavenotrace.ca/the-seven-principles-of-leave-no-trace/> ◀

## The Seven Principles of Leave No Trace

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare
2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
3. Dispose of Waste Properly
4. Leave What You Find
5. Minimize Campfire Impacts
6. Respect Wildlife
7. Be Considerate of Others

Images from  
<https://niagarabrucetrail.club/hiking/>



# NBTC 2024 Event Hikes

**ALAN LAVER**

HIKE COORDINATOR

The event hike season is once again upon us, and we are all looking forward to the exciting challenges that lay ahead. We encourage members of the Niagara Bruce Trail Club as well as others to participate.

## Fort-to-Fort



First off in 2024 is the Annual Fort to Fort event, which is organized by Lauren Doig and takes place on Saturday, April 20th and Sunday, April 21st.

You can hike the entire length of the Niagara Parkway, from Fort George to Fort Erie, over two days. Enjoy approximately 27 km each day of beautiful river scenery. Small hills involved but mostly paved paths with some road walking. Fee includes bus, checkpoints, and badge.

- 2 Days - \$65 for members, \$75 for non-members.
- 1 Day - \$50 for members, \$60 for non-members.
- Registration is available now. See [https://hikes.brucetrail.org/ecwd\\_calendar/niagara/](https://hikes.brucetrail.org/ecwd_calendar/niagara/)

## Niagara End-to-End



The annual three day End to End event is planned for the Victoria Day weekend of May 18, 19 and 20. It is being organized by Mary Ann Enns and we are still looking for volunteers to assist, so if you cannot participate as a hiker, consider signing up as a volunteer with Mary Ann at [maryannenns@gmail.com](mailto:maryannenns@gmail.com).

Cover this historic 80km section of the Bruce Trail over three days enjoying panoramic views of vineyards, orchards, and Lake Ontario. Rocky sections, heavily wooded areas, and remnants of historic settlements – *the Niagara section has it all*.

Registration fee includes bus transfers, snacks, and water checkpoints, plus a light lunch on the final day. You must complete all three days to earn this badge.

- 3 Days - \$80 for members, \$90 for non-members,
- 1 Day - \$40 for members, \$50 for non-members.
- Registration opens on February 17<sup>th</sup>. See [https://hikes.brucetrail.org/ecwd\\_calendar/niagara/](https://hikes.brucetrail.org/ecwd_calendar/niagara/)

## Eclipses!

March 28, 2024, 7:00 p.m.

On Monday, April 8, 2024, the Moon will pass in front of the Sun. This webinar will share how to prepare for this once-in-a-lifetime total solar eclipse, why this incredibly rare event is so exciting, and how to view the eclipse safely. Tune in to learn all about eclipses in general and what exactly to expect on April 8.

### Presenter:

Blake Ledger (he/him) is a PhD candidate in astronomy at McMaster University. Blake manages the W. J. McCallion Planetarium at McMaster and he is involved in many outreach initiatives on and off campus.

### To Register:

<https://brucetrail.org/eclipses-mar-28-2024/>

### Your Registration

#### Confirmation:

Since this webinar is for BTC members only, your registration confirmation & Zoom webinar link will be sent after your membership has been verified. Please allow two business days for this. Once your membership is verified, you'll receive an email confirmation from Bruce Trail Conservancy via [no-reply@zoom.us](mailto:no-reply@zoom.us). Please check your "Junk" or "Spam" email filters for confirmation emails from the Bruce Trail Conservancy via [no-reply@zoom.us](mailto:no-reply@zoom.us). ◀



## More Eclipse News!

Pick up your eclipse glasses at the BTC head office!

In partnership with McMaster University, the BTC is proud to be a pick-up location for eclipse glasses that allow you to view the spectacle safely. Stop by our office in Dundas (55 Head St, Unit 101, Dundas, ON L9H 3H8) on weekdays between 9:00am and 4:00pm to get your complimentary pair. ◀

## GO DIGITAL WITH YOUR BTC MAGAZINE

The Spring 2024 issue of *Bruce Trail Conservancy Magazine* will be hitting member mailboxes soon...and email inboxes even sooner! Now's a great time to support environmental sustainability efforts by making the switch to receive your magazine by email only, if you haven't already done so.

### There are three easy ways to make the switch!

- Use the online form: <https://forms.gle/eTZLRS8rVmYvKvaQA>
- Send an email to [info@brucetrail.org](mailto:info@brucetrail.org)
- Give us a call at 1-800-665-4453 ext 0. ◀

# NBTC 2024 Event Hikes

ALAN LAVER

HIKE COORDINATOR



## Laura Secord

The Laura Secord event is planned for Thursday, June 22, and this year is being organized by Debbie Demizio.

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 32km 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 fee includes bus transfers, water checkpoints, light lunch, and badge. There will be a special guest appearance by Laura herself at the end of the hike.

- Adults - \$40 for members, \$50 for non-members
- Kids - \$25 for members, \$30 for non-members

Check the schedule for registration.

[https://hikes.brucetrail.org/ecwd\\_calendar/niagara/](https://hikes.brucetrail.org/ecwd_calendar/niagara/)

## Merrithon



The annual Merrithon is the Ultimate Challenge taking place on Thursday, November 9th.

William Hamilton Merritt was the creator of the Welland Canal. The Merrithon is a trek approximately 45km along the first historic canal route. 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 fee covers bus transfers, snacks, water check points and a badge.

- \$50 for members
- \$60 for non-members

Check the schedule for registration.

[https://hikes.brucetrail.org/ecwd\\_calendar/niagara/](https://hikes.brucetrail.org/ecwd_calendar/niagara/) ◀



### "Take A Hike" bumper stickers (4"x8")

\$7 (includes \$2 shipping).

NBTC merchandise will be available at our event hikes, social events, and our AGM.

# NBTC Announces a NEW BADGE!!

## Niagara Black History Hiking Badge



The Niagara Black History Hiking Badge will be given to people who complete three out of the four hikes in the series of guided hikes that follow the historical trail focused upon the achievements and contributions of

early Black Freedom Seekers in the Niagara region. The first series of four hikes took place in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Info on future hikes will be posted on <https://niagarabrucestrail.club/badges/>

About the design of the badge:

In the centre of the badge is the Epa (“ee-pah”), a West African symbol that represents enslavement and captivity. It is found at the entrance to the Voices of Freedom Park in Niagara-on-the-Lake. The colours black, red, yellow, and green symbolize resilience, blood, optimism, and justice, and are used prominently to promote Black History Month throughout Canada.

For more information about Voices of Freedom Park and its design please visit:

<https://www.vofpark.org> ◀

## Update from the NBTC Biodiversity Committee

Submitted by Alicia Aitchison

The NBTC biodiversity committee has been hard at work planning for 2024! Things to look forward to:

- Spring work parties! We will be hosting several invasive species removal work parties at a few of our nature reserves, which will focus on removal of garlic mustard, greater celandine, English ivy, and archangel removal. Details will be posted on the hike calendar.
- NBTC Seed Orchard, started in 2023, we will be doing another planting to add to the variety of native plants that we have in our seed orchard. We will be able to start harvesting the seeds and strategically reseed along the trail, on our nature reserves and to repopulate where we have done invasive removals.
- Bluebird Trail Monitoring! New for 2024! We will be weekly monitoring and maintaining our new trail of ten bluebird boxes installed at the Woodend Nature Reserve.

To get involved and stay informed of our biodiversity activities, email [aliciaaitchison1@gmail.com](mailto:aliciaaitchison1@gmail.com) to be added to our biodiversity volunteer email listing.

Check out the hike calendar (see [https://hikes.brucestrail.org/ecwd\\_calendar/niagara/](https://hikes.brucestrail.org/ecwd_calendar/niagara/)) to join in a variety of nature hikes led by our biodiversity committee members and look for details of our new Biodiversity Badge – *coming soon!* ◀

Biodiversity Committee, “Pull Party,” from The Grapevine, Summer 2023.



Garlic Mustard Crib “Under Construction” from The Grapevine, Summer 2022.

**NBTC Biodiversity Update**  
From Page 10



Male Eastern Bluebird & Bluebird Boxes



From *Continuing Bluebird Support - NBTC Bluebird Trail Update*, Page 10, *The Grapevine* Winter 2023/2024



NBTC SEED ORCHARD  
See *The Grapevine*, Page 12, Winter 2023/2024

Use code **NIAGARABT** and for each tour booked by your club for 2024, we will donate \$25 to the Bruce Trail Conservancy.

# Take the path less travelled.

Image courtesy of Tourism PEI/Nick Jay

<b>P.E.I. Hiking</b>	DOUBLE	SINGLE
8 Days: July 20, 2024	\$4,395	\$5,195
<b>Newfoundland Coast-to-Coast</b>	DOUBLE	SINGLE
10 Days: August 1, 2024	\$5,995	\$6,995
<b>French Alps</b>	DOUBLE	SINGLE
11 Days: August 15, 2024	\$5,695	\$6,695
<b>Gaspé Hiking</b>	DOUBLE	SINGLE
9 Days: September 3, 2024	\$4,295	\$5,295
<b>Québec Eastern Townships</b>	DOUBLE	SINGLE
6 Days: September 22, 2024	\$2,895	\$3,595

DeLuxe Hiking is an official brand of DeNure Tours • 71 Mount Hope St. Lindsay, Ontario K9V 5N5

For more information on any of our hiking adventures contact:  
1-888-716-5523 • [deluxehiking.com](http://deluxehiking.com)



NBTC Seed Orchard,  
*The Grapevine*,  
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Winter 2023/2024



# Enjoy Nature

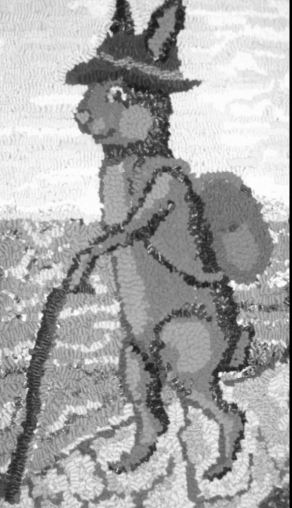
NBTC Volunteers work to preserve & maintain the trail for everyone, forever. You can support the TRAIL by donating at <http://niagarabrucetrail.club/wp/donate/>

experience  
**The East Coast Trail**  
 with  
**Brown Rabbit Walkabout**

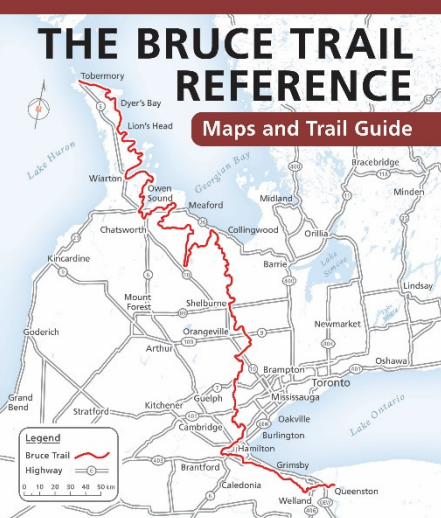
Hike 250 kms of beautiful coastal trails on the Avalon Peninsula in Newfoundland with our help.

We provide transportation from & to St. John's Airport, to and from trail heads, and three meals a day with accommodations.

For prices and information contact Isa.



Phone: 1-709-334-2208 Fax: 1-709-334-3601  
 Email: [brownrabbitcabins@gmail.com](mailto:brownrabbitcabins@gmail.com) [www.brownrabbit.nl.ca](http://www.brownrabbit.nl.ca)



**THE BRUCE TRAIL REFERENCE**  
 Maps and Trail Guide

Legend  
 Bruce Trail  
 Highway

Bruce Trail CONSERVANCY Edition 31



**THE Grapevine**  
 Newsletter of the Bruce Trail Conservancy Niagara Club

The Grapevine is the newsletter of the Niagara Bruce Club, one of the nine member clubs of the Bruce Trail Conservancy. The Grapevine appears four times a year.

NBTC Members are invited to submit stories and photos. Copy due date for Summer 2024 is April 30, 2024.

For editorial guidelines and for rates to advertise, contact [btcgrapevine@gmail.com](mailto:btcgrapevine@gmail.com)

**BRUCE TRAIL CONSERVANCY MISSION**  
*Preserving a ribbon of wilderness, for everyone, forever.*