

FALL 2025



## President's Message

**Ellen Savoia**

Fellow hikers, & friends, it is with immense pride and a deep sense of responsibility that I take on the role of President of the Niagara Bruce Trail Club. I am truly honored to be entrusted with this role, and I thank each of you for your support and confidence. I am grateful for the board's dedication to our shared passion for hiking, and their commitment to fostering a strong sense of community brought us to where we are today. I especially want to thank Janet Davey for her leadership and guidance over the past two years. Under her guidance, we established the Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee and the volunteer appreciation event to celebrate all those who have contributed to the success of this club. She has set a high bar, and I am committed to building upon the foundation that has been laid.

*Continued Page 2*



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### NIAGARA BRUCE TRAIL CLUB

P.O. Box 23021 ST. CATHARINES  
RPO CARLTON, ON, L2R 7P6

#### EMAIL

niagarabruceclub@gmail.com

#### WEBSITE

[niagarabruceclub.com](http://niagarabruceclub.com)

#### FACEBOOK

Niagara Bruce Trail Club

#### TWITTER

@BTCNiagara1

#### INSTAGRAM

@niagarabruceclub

## President's Message

From Page One

The Niagara Bruce Trail Club is more than just a group of people who enjoy hiking; we are a community of friends, a network of support, and a group of individuals who share a commitment to preserving a ribbon of wilderness for everyone, forever. And that is worth celebrating!

As we look ahead, I see a future filled with even more shared experiences, and a stronger, more engaged community. I envision a club where every member feels valued, connected, and inspired to participate. I believe that together, we can:

- **Strengthen our community:**

We will encourage volunteering for event hikes, biodiversity work, trail maintenance activities, stewardship, and other club activities. We will continue to strengthen landowner relations and opportunities to secure a permanent trail. We will also create opportunities for fundraising for land acquisition, as well events for members to connect with each other.

- **Promote environmental stewardship:**

We will organize invasive plant pulls, participate in conservation efforts, and educate our members about responsible hiking practices.

- **Embrace diversity and inclusion:**

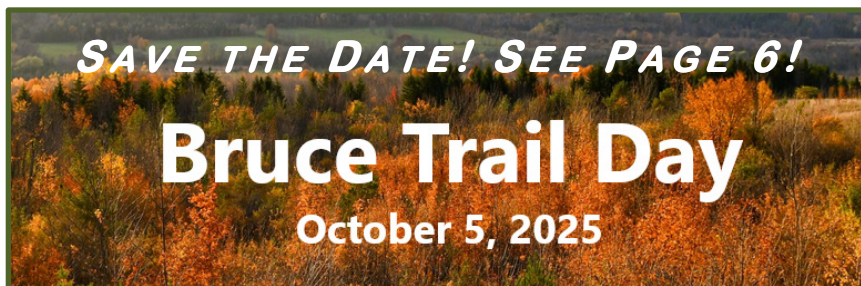
We will foster a welcoming environment for all. We will strive to create a club that is welcoming to hikers of all backgrounds, abilities, and experience levels.

- **Enhance our hiking experiences:**

We will continue to organize group hikes, and amazing event hikes and offer workshops on hiking skills and safety. We will create new ways to learn about the Niagara Section of the Bruce Trails using a variety of tools such as QR codes, signage, and social media.

This is not a vision that I can achieve alone. I encourage you to get involved through our many volunteer opportunities, join a group hike, and help shape the future of the Niagara Bruce Trail Club. Let's work together to make the Niagara Bruce Trail Club and our section of the Bruce Trail an even more vibrant, welcoming, and inspiring place.

Thank you again for this incredible opportunity. I am excited to embark on this journey with all of you. See you on the trail! ◀



# LAURA SECORD 2025

Submitted by Janet Davey

It was a hot and steamy day for our 32nd Laura Secord hike, held on June 22nd. 76 hikers met the buses at 5:45 a.m. to take them to the Laura Secord homestead. From there, hikers walked 32 kilometres along the Bruce Trail to DeCew House.

There was a brisk breeze at the start of the hike, and everyone hoped that it would continue for the remainder of the hike. Unfortunately, that was not to be! By the time the first hikers arrived at the first checkpoint, the breeze had totally disappeared, and hikers had to deal with the hot and humid conditions.

Once again, our wonderful volunteers were there to support the hikers along the way. A big **Thank You** to all the volunteers:

- **The trail maintenance volunteers** who trimmed and inspected the trail and ensured the blazes were easily seen.
- **The checkpoint volunteers and supporters** – Doug Thoms, Kathy Thoms, Judy Socha, Diane Marlatt, Lynn Menger, Charo Cuervo, Jeanne Covington, Fran Mortiboys, Debbie Fitzgerald, Joan Worthington.
- **The car shuttle drivers** – Debbie Earle, Howard Levine, Marinus Koole, Dian Wright. A special thanks to Debbie and Marinus who stayed way past their scheduled times.
- **Our photographer**, Deb Foster
- **Alan Laver**, for dropping off and taking down the tent and who was a lifesaver by taking water to hikers along the route.
- And last, but definitely not least, our amazing **Laura Secord**, Sharon Summerhayes!



What was so great to see this year was the support that the hikers gave to each other along the route. Hikers waited to make sure that others safely made it to the end of the hike, they cheered each other on, and new friendships were formed.

The first hiker arrived at 11:17 a.m. at DeCew House and the last hikers at 3:38 p.m.

**Congratulations and thank you to all the hikers!**

If you were unable to finish, remember that you can still complete the hike at any time and earn the individual Laura Secord badge.

**We hope to see many of you next year! ♡**

Photos: Deb Foster



# NBTC's "Meet a Newcomer" Hike

August 11, 2025



The evening of August 11<sup>th</sup>, NBTC members gathered to welcome and support several 'newcomers to hiking' on the Bruce Trail.

Five 'newcomers' earned the First Hike Badge.

NBTC's inaugural 'Meet a Newcomer Hike' will be the first of many more!

Thanks to Maryam Garshasbi and Mary-Lyn Hopper for coming up with the idea and orchestrating the hike.

Thanks to Margaret Northfield for leading the group around Firemen's Park!

Thanks to Jim Arcangeletti for being the hike photographer! ◀

## To Cap it Off!



**BTC Ribbon of Wilderness Hat: \$30.00**  
*Perfect for your next outing on the Bruce Trail!*

- Available in Mustard or Navy
- Material: 100% Chino Twill
- Fit: Classic/Low profile
- Style: Unstructured/ 6 panel/ Pre curved
- Size: Adjustable Band

**TO ORDER:** <https://brucetrail.org/product/btc-ribbon-of-wilderness-hat-2/> ◀



Welcome and Opening Remarks from Maryam



New hikers, and new friends on the trail.

# Voices of Freedom in NOTL

Submitted by Karen Couch

Volunteer Hike Leader  
Niagara Bruce Trail Club

On July 9, 2025, hikers took the opportunity to better understand, celebrate and honor Niagara-on-the-Lake's (NOTL) significant and nation-building Black history. They participated in a series of three consecutive hikes. All hikes centered around Voices of Freedom, an experiential art installation in downtown NOTL.



Communal Circle, Voices of Freedom

Voices of Freedom tells stories of people of African descent, enslaved, freed and free, whose sacrifices, labor, skills, and talents contributed to the development of NOTL and Canada ([www.vofpark.org](http://www.vofpark.org)).

First, we heard the voice of Chloe Cooley, a young Black woman, enslaved and living near Queenston at the end of the 18th century. Her voice and determination led to the introduction of the first piece of legislation to limit enslavement in the British colonies. This happened on July 9, 1793, setting the stage for the great freedom movement known as the Underground Railroad.



Fort Mississauga, Niagara-on-the-Lake

Next, we heard the voices of Richard Pierpoint and the Coloured Corps.

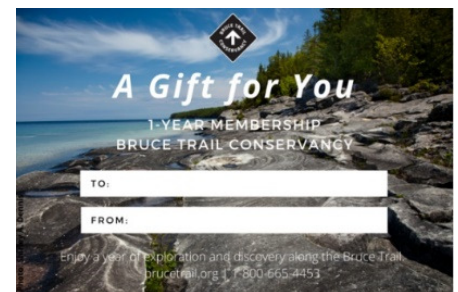
Richard Pierpoint, a formerly enslaved Black Loyalist, found himself living in Niagara in 1812. He sent a petition to military authorities, offering to raise a corps of coloured men to defend the colony. While initially rejected, Major-General Sir Isaac Brock, a key military leader in the War of 1812 changed his mind, realizing the merit of such a proposal. Pierpoint recruited men and enlisted as a private in the Coloured Corps. They fought with distinction to

repel the American invasion at Queenston Heights and Fort George, and later helped build Fort Mississauga. They also paved the way for broader acceptance of African Canadians in the military.

Lastly, hikers heard the stories of, and visited the sites of former residences of three families of African descent: Wesley, Waters and Riley. These families were influential, socially, and politically; helping to lay the foundation of Canada's diverse and inclusive society.

In honoring these voices, we connect the past to our present journey. It's important to remember these voices as we strive to fulfill the BTC's mission, to preserve a ribbon of wilderness for everyone forever; to build an environment where everyone belongs. Readers are encouraged to go to the following link for more information:

<https://blackhistorysociety.ca> ◀



## A GIFT OF MEMBERSHIP

A Gift Membership is a great way to introduce a friend or family member to the Bruce Trail and the wonders of the Niagara Escarpment.

Your gift recipient will receive: a welcome package, a card letting them know of your gift, all the benefits of BTC membership, and any products you purchase in the same order as part of the gift membership.

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

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



## Landowners Appreciation Celebration Ball's Falls Conservation Area Sun Sept 7 from 2-5pm

Join us for the celebration and say thank you to Niagara's landowners for allowing us to hike across their private property

Short Nature Hikes: Departing at 3pm & 3:30pm  
Biodiversity & Land Stewardship Education  
Prize Raffles (draw at 4:30pm)  
Delicious Food and Cash Bar



Get the details and sign up via the hike calendar; all you need to do is bring a dessert to share. See you there!



## "CONNECTIONS ON THE TRAIL"

### BRUCE TRAIL DAY AT THE NIAGARA BRUCE TRAIL CLUB

This year, we're celebrating how the Bruce Trail connects us, whether it be to nature, each other, or ourselves. Open to all!

Niagara College Campus off Taylor Rd.

Sunday, October 5, 9:00am-12:30pm

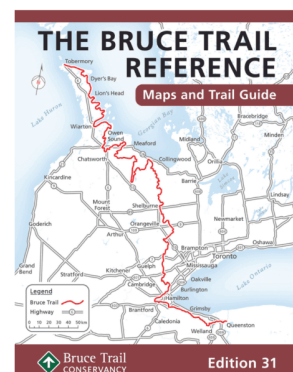
Check NBTC's Facebook page for updates.

Bruce Trail Day 2025 will feature a **Bruce Trail Reference Guide giveaway**, supported by the **Greenbelt Foundation**, for attendees at events celebrating the day on Sunday, October 5, 2025. Details about how attendees can participate in the giveaway will be shared closer to the event's date.

**Thanks to the Greenbelt Foundation for its generous support of Bruce Trail Day.**

### FOR MORE INFO, SEE

[HTTPS://HIKES.BRUCETRAIL.ORG/EVENT/HIKING-101-SEPT-14-21-28-2025](https://hikes.brucetrail.org/event/hiking-101-sept-14-21-28-2025)



# NBTC Volunteer Awards 2025

<https://niagarabruce-trail.club/volunteer-awards/>

Since 1963 volunteers have been the driving force behind the Bruce Trail.

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. Current board members not eligible.

**Nomination Criteria and Process:** For complete details on the nomination criteria and process, see

<https://niagarabruce-trail.club/volunteer-awards/>

**Award Presentation:** The award will be a plaque with NBTC logo, award name, recipient(s) name, and photo to be presented at the annual Volunteer Appreciation Event. ◀



# SNEAK PEAK for 2026

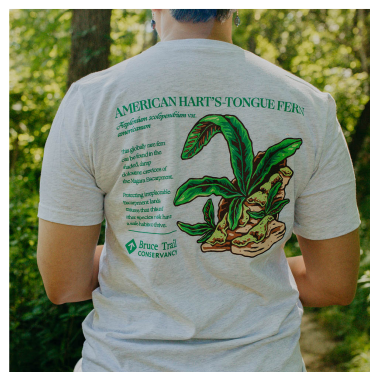
Use code **NIAGARAST** and for each tour booked by your club for 2025, we will donate \$25 to the Bruce Trail Conservancy.

## MORE DETAILS COMING SOON!

- Portugal Hiking**  
7 Days: Spring
- Hike Saskatchewan**  
10 Days: June 17
- Yukon Hiking**  
12 Days: June 19
- P.E.I. Hiking**  
7 Days: July 5, August 30
- Newfoundland West Hiking**  
7 Days: August 15
- Newfoundland East Hiking**  
7 Days: August 23

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## American Hart's-tongue Fern T-Shirt -\$39.50

This 100% cotton t-shirt features an illustration of the Hart's-tongue Fern, a rare and beautiful species of fern found along the Niagara Escarpment.

- Available in unisex size S-4XL
- 100% Ring-spun cotton
- Fit: Retail fit

Order from the Bruce Trail Conservancy's store. See: <https://bruce-trail.org/store/> ◀



# 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  
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**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 the Winter 2025 issue is October 31<sup>st</sup>.

For editorial guides 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.*