

INSIDE: PHOTO CONTEST 2026 FINALISTS

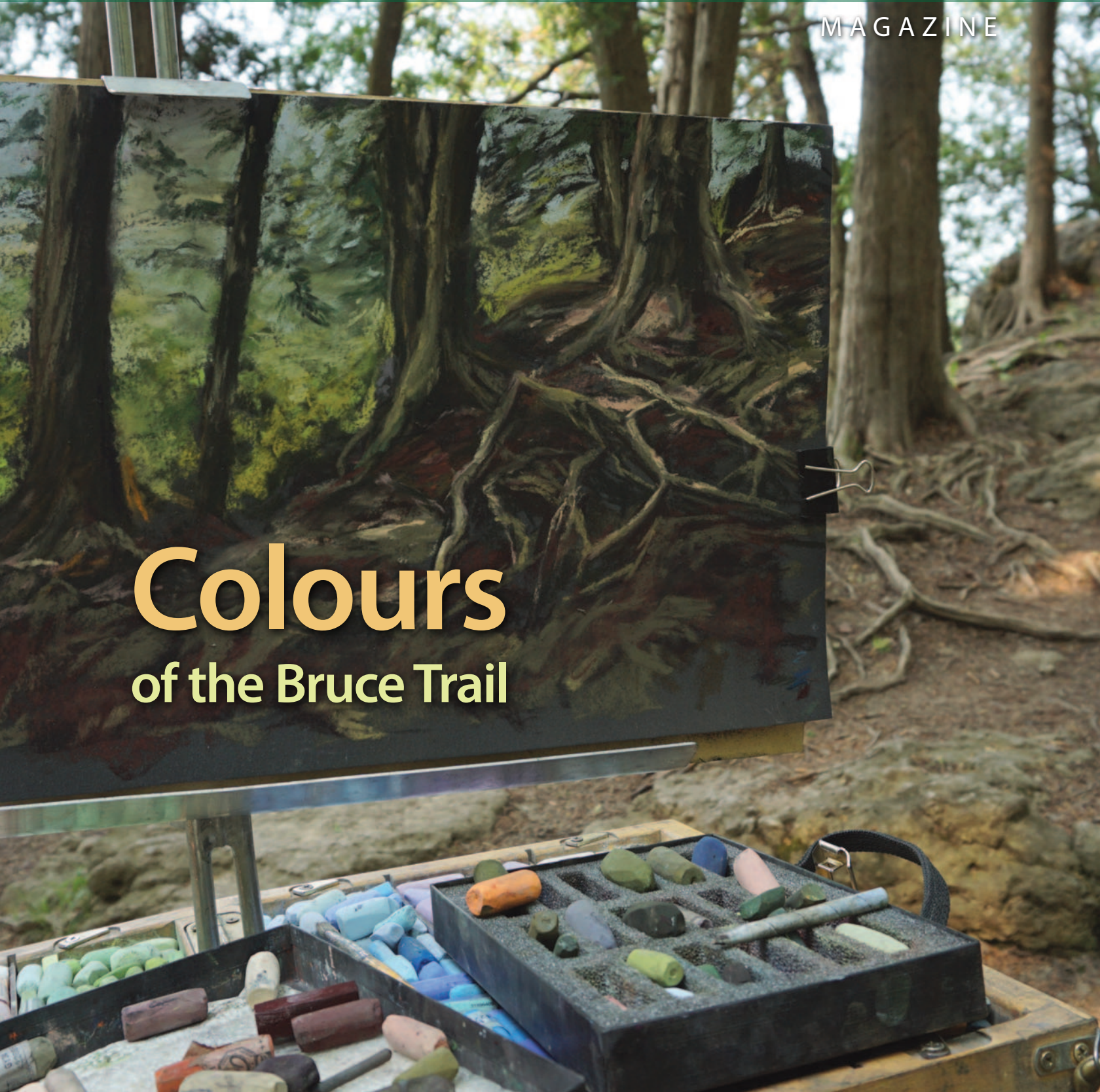
VOL. 63, NO.4, FALL 2026

Bruce Trail

C O N S E R V A N C Y

MAGAZINE

Colours of the Bruce Trail



Our Mission

Preserving a ribbon of wilderness, for everyone, forever.



Bruce Trail
CONSERVANCY

FALL 2026



Photo: Tim Semeels

10

Features

- 8 Bruce Trail Day – October 4, 2026
- 9 BTC Member Promo from KEEN Canada
- 10 Photo Contest 2026 – Colours of the Bruce Trail
- 16 The Other Fall Colours: Reading the shifting autumn palettes of meadows
- 20 Finding Creativity and Camaraderie along the Bruce Trail
- 29 BTC Becomes Rainbow Registered
- 30 Bruce Trail Hike-a-thon 2026
- 32 Donating Securities: Creating lasting impact with a tax-effective gift

Departments

- 5 CEO's Message
- 6 Blazes
- 9 For Our Members: Share Your Membership Story
- 14 Explore Like a Local
- 24 Conservation in Action: New Protected Areas
- 26 What's in Your Pack?
- 34 Trail Changes
- 36 Our Donors
- 42 BTC Store

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- Call 1-800-665-4453, or
- Email info@brucetrail.org



Photo: Catherine Talbot

20

Cover photo: Plein air art on the Bruce Trail, by Cathy Lorraway

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Chief Executive Officer's Message

As Chief Executive Officer of the Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC), I am fortunate to regularly spend time along our iconic Bruce Trail.

With each outing I become mesmerized all over again by the fantastic spectrum of colour that reveals itself. I am endlessly fascinated with how many shades of green I perceive, and at this time of year, I am eager to watch the colours of the leaves change like so many other Bruce Trail explorers.

Fall along the Bruce Trail is truly spectacular, but there are colours that catch our eyes in every season. As we move across our 900 km footpath throughout the year, the colours of the landscapes, plants, and animal species that thrive within our conservation corridor change, too. From the sparkling blue waters of Georgian Bay on the Saugeen (Bruce) Peninsula and the more muted blue-greens of the Niagara River, to the

welcome brightness of spring ephemerals and iridescent wings of pollinators, to the bird species that migrate through our protected natural areas, the Bruce Trail is truly a feast for the eyes.

Colour is also critically important in navigating the Bruce Trail: from our blue blazed side trails to our white blazed Main Trail, colour helps shape every aspect of the hiking experience.

In this issue of *Bruce Trail Conservancy Magazine*, colour takes many shapes. Inside you will find the winners and finalists from our Colours of the Bruce Trail photo contest, whose pictures showcase a breathtaking range of flora, fauna, and scenery from across our trail network. You will also find a feature about the talented artists of Bruce Trail Inspired 3 whose dazzling works you can see for yourself at their next showcase in support of the BTC this November.

While the leaves may steal the show this time of year, we share an article about the colourful changes to be witnessed in

our meadows and grasslands. You'll also read about the Rainbow Registered designation the BTC and its Clubs have received for our commitment to fostering inclusion throughout our organization and on the Trail.

As I think about the theme of this issue, I can't forget the many colours hikers bring to the Bruce Trail. From their gear and attire to the backpacks that proudly display badges and pins, the people who use the Bruce Trail to connect with nature are an important part of what makes it so special. If you're hiking the Bruce Trail, you probably also bring some colour home with you: mud on your boots, pollen on your clothes, the white residue of sunscreen, or a warm flush in your cheeks. The colours of the Bruce Trail find a way to stay with us.

Happy Hiking,

Michael McDonald,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Photo: Michael McDonald

BLAZES

News and Events from the Bruce Trail Clubs

NIAGARA

niagara.bruce-trail.org

Merrithon – November 7, 2026

The Merrithon is a trek of approximately 45 km along the first historic canal route of the Welland Canal, created by William Hamilton Merritt. 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 is \$50 for members, \$60 for non-members. Fee includes bus transfers, snacks, water check points and a badge.

IROQUOIA

iroquoia.on.ca

What3words Challenge

Explore the Iroquoia Bruce Trail in a whole new way with the what3words Challenge!

Ready to turn your hikes into a trail-side treasure hunt? Download the what3words app and our PDF checklist. Then explore our special stops between Grimsby and Milton, use the app to get the three-word combos at each location, and then write down the 3 words to earn your badge. No need to do it all in one go! Hike it your way, in any order, and enjoy the adventure along the white blazes.

Just bring good boots, water, and your sense of adventure, and remember to stay on marked trails. When you've found all 10 spots, claim your Iroquoia what3words badge and celebrate a hike well played! For more info visit iroquoia.on.ca/hiking/badges/w3wchallenge



Steeltown Stomp – October 3, 2026

After another terrific turnout last fall, the Steeltown Stomp is back for 2026 – and we're ready to make it our best hike yet! Mark your calendars for Saturday, October 3, and get ready to hit the stairs, conquer the climbs, and enjoy some of the most spectacular views Hamilton has to offer.

Our 2025 event drew nearly 200 hikers who tackled 23 kilometres and 2,000

escarpment steps, exploring waterfalls, city lookouts, and forested trails – while raising more than \$6,200 in support of the Bruce Trail Conservancy.

Whether you're aiming for a personal challenge or simply want to take in the sights with fellow hikers, the Steeltown Stomp is a fantastic way to celebrate autumn on the Niagara Escarpment.

Registration for the 2026 Stomp opens soon – see you on the steps!

Bruce Trail Talks Session 2: On the Trail of Wellness – October 18, 2026

As the pace of modern life accelerates, the need to reconnect with the natural world has never been more urgent. This October, join world-renowned environmental neuroscientist Dr. Marc Berman and leading brain health researcher Dr. Jennifer Heisz for an engaging afternoon that brings science to the trail. Together, they'll reveal how time spent on the Bruce Trail can sharpen our minds, strengthen our bodies, and restore our sense of balance.

Explore the profound link between

nature and well-being, from cognitive clarity to emotional resilience, the evidence is clear: nature heals. Whether you're a seasoned hiker or simply curious about the power of green space, this session offers a compelling reminder that sometimes the best thing we can do for our health is step outside. Sunday, October 18, 2-4 pm at The Westdale Theatre. Tickets available at <https://iroquoia.on.ca/bruce-trail-talks>

CALEDON HILLS

caledonbruce-trail.ca

Caledon Hills Fall Colours End-to-End: October 10-12, 2026

Plan to enjoy the spectacular fall colours as you hike 72.4 kilometres of main Trail through the famous Caledon Hills. The distance can be completed on Saturday and Sunday only (two-day option) or over the long weekend (three-day option). A new 2-day badge is available!



Photo: Caledon Hills Bruce Trail Club

End-to-End hikes are challenging and not recommended for new hikers. Instead, check out the wide range of regular group hikes offered by Bruce Trail Clubs throughout the year at hikes.bruce-trail.org.

DUFFERIN HI-LAND

dufferinbrucetrailclub.org

DHBTC Environmental Stewardship Award Presented to ODSS Grad

Over the past two years, Dufferin Hi-Land Bruce Trail Club (DHBTC) Biodiversity Committee has collaborated with Kurtis McMurray, Head of Canadian & World Studies at Orangeville District Secondary School (ODSS) to enable students to participate in ecological restoration projects.

This year, McMurray proposed that DHBTC initiate a \$500 Environmental Stewardship Award, presented to a graduating student who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in fostering environmental sustainability in their school and local community. DHBTC Board unanimously agreed.



Makenna Olmstead, winner of the inaugural DHBTC Environmental Stewardship Award

Photo: Liz Jansen

The inaugural award goes to **Makenna Olmstead**.

Makenna's interest in the natural world began at a young age when she spent much time hiking on the Bruce Trail and camping. McMurray says that Makenna was a star in the Geography program, achieving high grades in all courses. Through ODSS's Greenhouse class she received practical experience with sustainable agriculture and environmental science. Makenna demonstrated her commitment to

making ODSS more sustainable and played a key role in the GAEA Club (Green Association for Environmental Activism – pronounced Gaia) assuming leadership roles in planning wetland and schoolyard clean ups, Earth Week activities, school clothing swaps, waste reduction programs, and the school's Monarch Butterfly Gardens. She also participated in several ODSS Bruce Trail projects.

This September, Makenna begins Environmental Science studies at the University of Guelph, majoring in Wildlife Biology and Conservation. Coincidentally, this is the program where BTC Ecologist Mara McHaffie, who led a restoration project Makenna participated in this summer, began her academic studies. We wish Makenna all the best as she begins this exciting new venture.

25 km Challenge Hike – October 17, 2026

On October 17 challenge yourself, your family, friends or anyone, to complete the one-day 25 km hike through the spectacularly serene yet invigorating fields and forests of the Boyne River Valley in the Dufferin Hi-Land section of the Bruce Trail. All participants who complete the hike will be awarded our coveted badge. More information at dufferinbrucetrailclub.org.



Photo: Jon Spayne

Hike Registration:
visit hikes.brucetrail.org to register for any hike listed here (unless otherwise noted).

BEAVER VALLEY

beavervalleybrucetrail.org

Beaver Valley Snowshoe Adventure Badge – February 6 & 20, 2027

BVBTC invites you to join us this winter in our beautiful Beaver Valley for the Snowshoe Adventure Badge excursions. Enjoy a sparkling winter afternoon in the snow and, if you haven't experienced the Trail on a moonlit evening, now's your chance. Our daytime snowshoe hike is on February 6 and our evening hike is on February 20, the night of the full moon, so fingers crossed for clear skies!

Participants completing both hikes will receive the Beaver Valley Snowshoe Adventure Badge, affectionately known as the "berserk beaver". Please bring \$10 (members) or \$15 (non-members) for the badge to the second outing. Registration opens in the fall. •



Bruce Trail Day – October 4, 2026

Let's Celebrate Together on the Trail

Bruce Trail Day is an annual celebration of the incredible Bruce Trail and the wonders of the Niagara Escarpment, hosted by the Bruce Trail Conservancy at each of its Bruce Trail Clubs.

This year's theme is "Together on the Trail". It's a wonderful opportunity for members to introduce friends, family and neighbors to all that we love about the Bruce Trail. We'll be gathering from end to end and encouraging others to become part of our growing community.

Join us for free guided hikes and family activities to help you explore the Bruce Trail and discover the amazing variety of life along the Niagara Escarpment.

Learn more at brucetrail.org/bruce-trail-day-2026

Bring your friends to one of these Bruce Trail Day 2026 events:

LOCATION	HOSTED BY
Brock University, St Catharines	Niagara Bruce Trail Club
City View Park, Burlington	Iroquoia Bruce Trail Club
Evergreen Brickworks, Toronto (Oct. 3)	Toronto Bruce Trail Club
Limehouse, Halton Hills	Toronto Bruce Trail Club
Meltwater Moraine Nature Reserve, Caledon East	Caledon Hills Bruce Trail Club
Splitrock Narrows Nature Reserve, Shelburne	Dufferin Hi-Land Bruce Trail Club
Nottawasaga Bluffs Conservation Area, Clearview	Blue Mountains Bruce Trail Club
Village of Kimberley	Beaver Valley Bruce Trail Club
Harrison Park, Owen Sound	Sydenham Bruce Trail Club
Ferndale Visitor Centre, Ferndale	Peninsula Bruce Trail Club

MATCHING OPPORTUNITY

All donations to the Bruce Trail Conservancy on Bruce Trail Day weekend are being matched by a generous anonymous donor and will directly contribute to the future of the Bruce Trail.

Your gift will go twice as far on October 3 and 4 at brucetrail.org/donate-btday2026.



Photo: Yayo Umersubo

FOR OUR MEMBERS

Share Your Membership Story

What sparked your membership journey?

Were you seeking connection with other nature lovers or looking for motivation to get active? Did you have a life-changing end-to-end experience? Were you fired up to protect greenspace in Ontario? Did you fall in love with those white and blue blazes?

Whatever the reason, we are grateful you made the decision to support the Bruce Trail Conservancy through membership.

As we get ready to celebrate the Bruce Trail's 60th Anniversary in 2027, we'd love to hear about your connection to the Bruce Trail and what membership means to you.

Please visit brucetrail.org/membership-story-2026 to share your story in a short questionnaire.

We're especially interested in hearing how membership has impacted you personally or connected you with nature or the Bruce Trail community. Through your story, you can help inspire others to discover membership and support the future of the Bruce Trail.

Selected stories may be featured in future *Bruce Trail Conservancy Magazine* articles, social media posts, website

content, and membership campaigns. (Stories can remain anonymous.)

Your story is part of the Bruce Trail and we hope you'll take a moment to share it.



BTC Member Promo from KEEN this September

Get ready to hike, run or stroll in new footwear this fall with an exclusive offer for Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC) members from KEEN Canada.

Throughout September 2026, BTC members can receive **30% off an online purchase** at www.keenfootwear.ca with a special one-use promo code. The code is valid from September 1 to 30, 2026 for any single online purchase (except for items already covered under existing promotions).

Access your KEEN promo code at brucetrail.org/my-account/member-discounts. Simply login as a member and look under "Redemption instructions" on the Member Discounts tab. Contact the BTC office for any assistance.

Extend your exploration of Bruce Trail through this special BTC member perk!



NATURE IN TECHNICOLOUR

Colours of the Bruce Trail Photo Contest Winners and Finalists

By Ali Schofield



What colours do you notice when you hike the Bruce Trail?

Perhaps you're drawn to the radiant red cap on a Pileated Woodpecker, or the orange and gray ribbons of a Turkey Tail fungi. Maybe you gravitate towards not a single colour, but the pink ombres on the petals of a trillium or orchid. Photographers who submitted to our recent photo contest, *Colours of the Bruce Trail*, noticed these colours and many, many more.

While our call for submissions this year was relatively general – colour is everywhere, after all – the fun was in learning what caught the eyes of Bruce Trail explorers. Entrants showed a fascination with fungi, flowers, and the shades of yellow and orange along the Bruce Trail in fall. They shared pictures that played with light and observed shadows, captured weather conditions and the changing seasons, and documented triumphs and joyful moments along our ribbon of wilderness. Through their lenses, both the explorer and the viewer get a chance to pause and marvel at nature and our collective experience in it.

Every year it brings the Bruce Trail Conservancy team great joy to see what hikers see when they are out exploring the Bruce Trail. While we can only share a handful of the entries here, we truly appreciate every submission and hope each entrant had fun in the process.

Please enjoy the vibrant views and moody hues of *Colours of the Bruce Trail*.

Winner – Knock, Knock, Who's There?
Tim Serneels

Runner-Up – Turkey Tails
Marsha Courtney



Runner-Up – Webster Falls
Elisha Faith Magno



Magical Springtime on the Trail
Jo Lamport

Wintery Grotto
Sourav Ghosh



Fabulous Fall
Monica Pasquali



Joy at the Cairn
Ruth Moffatt



Natural Blazes
Olivia Brown



Eye to the Sky
Buddy Myles



Mac Kirk Side Trail
Doug Galloway





Explore Like a Local

With recommendations from Bruce Trail Conservancy volunteers

Photo: Dana O. (via Tripadvisor)

Fall is a great time to hit the Bruce Trail in search of vibrant colours and authentic experiences.

While you're out for a hike, why not stop at some of the many locally owned businesses along the Niagara Escarpment? Check out these recommendations from local volunteers in the Niagara and Blue Mountains Bruce Trail Clubs.

NIAGARA BRUCE TRAIL CLUB

Bench Brewing Company

3991 King St., Beamsville

Recommended by Ellen S., NBTC President

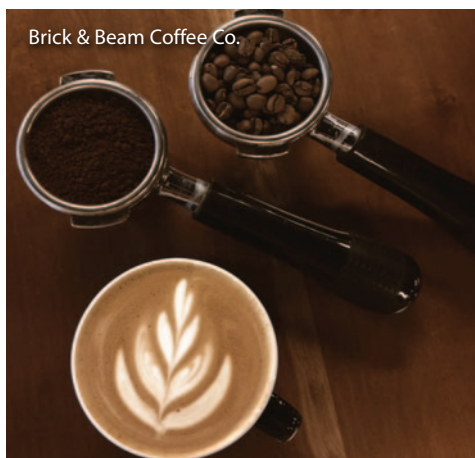
Bench Brewing is a must-visit for hikers in the beautiful Niagara Benchlands wine region. Located in the historic refurbished Maple Grove School, the brewery has a large tasting room and restaurant that offers a unique mix of sandwiches and pub food. Ellen says that the BENCH BBQ Pork Nachos, which can also be ordered with BBQ Tempeh, are a fan favourite and suggests trying the different types of beer and ciders on offer with a flight.

Brick & Beam Coffee Co.

4979 King St., Beamsville

Recommended by Jessica R., NBTC Volunteer & Membership Coordinator

Looking for a selection of local coffees, teas and baked goods? Jessica recommends Brick & Beam, a locally-owned cafe in downtown Beamsville. With ample seating and a cozy



atmosphere, it's a great place to gather with friends. Jessica often orders an iced vanilla latte with a chocolate croissant, calling it the perfect post-hike treat!

The Judge and Jester

17 Main St. E., Grimsby

Recommended by David K., NBTC Land Securement Committee Volunteer

For lunch or dinner, David recommends the Judge and Jester in downtown Grimsby. Some of his favourite menu items include the Mediterranean or Caesar salad, the Veal Schnitzel, or the feature, which is often a delicious prime rib dinner served with a Yorkshire pudding. This classic British-style pub is known for its welcoming atmosphere. It hosts regular trivia nights on Tuesdays,

and is an excellent spot to catch up on the latest sporting events, which are often shown on the pub's large-screen TVs.



The Judge and Jester

Photo: Acapulco Fred (via Tripadvisor)

BLUE MOUNTAINS BRUCE TRAIL CLUB

Gordon's Market & Café

1 Hume St., Unit 107, Collingwood

Recommended by Michael T., BMBTC

Director at Large

Gordon's Market & Café is a friendly independently-owned café and market where people can gather and enjoy quality salads, soups, sandwiches, baked goods, and coffee. Recommended by longtime volunteer Michael, the market also provides a wonderful selection of high-quality produce and other groceries. Products are sourced as locally and as environmentally responsibly as possible. As a bonus, Gordon's has been a strong supporter of community groups, including the Blue Mountains Bruce Trail Club.



Side Launch Brewing Company

Photo: c/o Side Launch Brewing Company



Gordon's Market & Café

Photo: c/o Gordon's Market & Café

Lots to Discover

Whether visiting the Bench region or heading up to view the fall colours in the Blue Mountains, we hope you have a chance to visit these local destinations as well as the many others dotted along the Niagara Escarpment.

Please note that these are recommendations based on the experiences of our volunteers who did not receive anything in exchange for this listing. They are not official endorsements from the Bruce Trail Conservancy, nor paid advertisements from the businesses. Think of this like printed word-of-mouth from your fellow hikers. •

Side Launch Brewing Company

200 Mountain Rd., Unit 1, Collingwood

Recommended by Jim L., BMBTC President

Collingwood is renowned for its history of building ships and launching them sideways due to its shallow harbour. Side Launch Brewing was named in honour of that tradition. Side Launch features several craft beers, including nonalcoholic beverages. Club President Jim enjoys visiting the taproom to take in live bands or other community events. He also appreciates the rotating food trucks on site that provide a variety of great snacks and meals.

The Alphorn Restaurant

209881 Hwy 26, Blue Mountains

Recommended by Claudio D., BMBTC

Member

Claudio recommends visiting The Alphorn, a restaurant inspired by the flavours of Switzerland, Germany, and Austria that has welcomed skiers, hikers, and visitors to the Collingwood area for over 40 years. Open for breakfast, lunch and dinner, it's a popular meeting place where guests can enjoy European classics such as schnitzel, fondue, and sausages before or after a day on the Trail.



The Alphorn Restaurant

Photo: c/o The Alphorn Restaurant



The Other Fall Colours

Reading the shifting autumn palettes of meadows

By Laura Tuohy

Photo: Brian Popelier

The Niagara Escarpment's forests burst into colourful panoramas every fall, drawing 'leaf-peeping' hikers from far and wide to experience their fleeting beauty along the Bruce Trail.

But beyond the crimson canopy, another fall colour change is unfolding in the Escarpment's meadows and grasslands. Shifting our gaze to these open habitats can reveal a hidden world; and paying attention to their subtle colour cues can even open our eyes to the health of the landscape itself.

Golds, purples, coppers and bronzes

As summer comes to a close, goldenrods and asters take centre stage in Escarpment meadows, transforming the landscape. Canada Goldenrod glows like tall yellow fountains. New England Aster blazes with vivid royal purple blooms. Frost Aster forms clusters of tiny white stars.

Native grasses add depth and darker hues to the mix: Little Bluestem shifts from its blue-green summer blades to shades of mahogany, rust, and purple-red, while Big Bluestem and Switchgrass deepen to amber and bronze. Between these dominant plants, other colours

peek through, like the burgundy stems of Joe-Pye Weed and the rich chocolate seed heads of the Black-eyed Susans.

Beyond the beauty, this kaleidoscope of colour, shape and texture is a sign of a diverse habitat.

A tale of two fields

Not all open grassy spaces along the Bruce Trail share this richness of colour, form and species. Many former agricultural fields on the Escarpment are near monocultures of a few non-native

Goldenrod Crab Spider at Cattail Marsh Nature Reserve



Photo: Brian Popelier

grasses, thistles, and invasive plants like Dog-strangling Vine. In fall, these spaces look uniform and muted. The dominant grasses grow to a similar height, then quickly dry into a monochromatic tan, and collapse into flat, bleached mats.

A healthy meadow tells a different story. Flowers and grasses of varied hues bloom at different times, at mixed heights, with multiple textures and structures. Even after the last blooms have faded, standing stalks and seed heads continue to provide crucial food and shelter for a variety of insects, mammals and birds. A rich tapestry of distinct hues and shapes creates habitat diversity. It allows species to occupy different niches and creates conditions for biodiversity to flourish.



Big Bluestem

Photo: Carol Nelson (Naturalist CC BY-NC)

The last feast

Through this variety, autumn meadows become nature's final critical banquet before winter. At this feast, pollinators are completing important life stages, migratory species are fueling up for journeys, and resident birds and mammals are preparing for the scarcity of the frozen months ahead.

It all begins with the beautiful partnership of goldenrods and asters.

Commonly growing together, Canada Goldenrods and New England Asters have complementary colours (yellow and purple) that intensify each other, creating a vibrant display particularly attractive to pollinators – drawing more insects to the combined patch than either flower would attract alone.

Goldenrods and asters bloom when few other plants are flowering and provide some of the last pollen and nectar sources of the year. Monarchs fill up on this late season bounty before their cross-continental migration. Newly-mated queen Bumblebees gorge on the nectar to build up fat reserves before hibernation. Hundreds of species of insects are supported by this partnership, with as many as 42 species of bees relying on goldenrod alone for food.

But the feast doesn't end there.

Between the tall stalks of flowers and grasses, Yellow Garden Spiders build massive webs to trap grasshoppers, flies and other small insects. Perched on the bending tops of plants, Goldfinches feast on the seeds of Evening Primrose, while Savannah Sparrows pick at the spittlebug nymphs hiding on goldenrod stems. Through hidden tunnel networks in the tall grass, Meadow Voles and White-



Autumn Meadowhawks

Photo: Brian Popelier

footed Mice forage intensely for fallen seeds to stock their winter caches. Overhead, Kestrels and Red-tailed Hawks are drawn to all the activity and prey on the small mammals and insects below.

At every level, fall meadows become a seasonal hub of activity.



Canada Goldenrod and New England Aster

Photo: Brooke Henry

Mottled Duskywing



Photo: Dan Riley (iNaturalist CC BY)

Subtle signs of a species at risk

Amidst all the busyness and colour of Escarpment meadows and grasslands in the fall, other more subtle interactions are also playing out.

Most of us are familiar with the beauty of the showy Monarch butterfly and its incredible migration across North America. With its bold stripes in both caterpillar and adult form, and its precarious habitat needs, it has become the poster-insect of the conservation world. But another endangered butterfly, less conspicuous and perhaps even more vulnerable, is hanging on in Escarpment grasslands: the Mottled Duskywing.

As its name suggests, this lovely lepidopteran displays a pattern of browns and greys with a dappling of yellow-brown spots on its tiny wings. The Mottled Duskywing was once found throughout eastern and central U.S. and parts of south-central Canada but is now designated as Endangered in Ontario and in Canada. In Ontario, it is only found in a few isolated populations in the south where its larval host plants occur.

As Common Milkweed is to the Monarch, so New Jersey Tea is to the Mottled Duskywing. The Mottled Duskywing relies exclusively on New Jersey Tea and its close relative, Prairie Redroot, as the sole host plants where females lay their eggs and caterpillars feed.

In late fall, mature Mottled Duskywing caterpillars move down to the ground layer, weaving silk shelters within the New Jersey Tea's fallen leaves to overwinter.

A native shrub supporting many pollinators, New Jersey Tea thrives in dry open habitats. It is declining in the wild primarily due to habitat loss, the suppression of natural fires, heavy browsing by deer, and competition from invasive plants.

To support species at risk like the Mottled Duskywing and strengthen biodiversity, the Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC) is planting key native species like New Jersey Tea and restoring meadows and tallgrass prairie habitats throughout the Niagara Escarpment.

Restoring colour, restoring life

The unique palettes of native meadows and tallgrass prairies have nearly disappeared from Ontario. Tallgrass prairies in particular are among the province's rarest ecosystems, with less than three percent of their historical range remaining intact. Urban expansion, intensified agriculture, and the suppression of natural disturbances like fire have contributed to their decline.

As these habitats disappear, the losses ripple throughout the ecosystem. Pollinators lose nectar sources and host plants. Grassland birds lose nesting habitat. Small mammals, reptiles, and countless insects lose food, shelter, and breeding sites. The result is not only a less colourful landscape, but a less diverse one.



Common Eastern Bumble Bee

Photo: Brian Popelier

Across its nature reserves, the BTC is actively restoring meadows and rare grassland habitats by:

- removing invasive plants through pulling or applying targeted herbicide;
- sowing with native seed mixes and planting native grasses and forbs (wildflowers);
- conducting controlled burns, when conditions are right, to manage invasive competition and mimic the natural disturbance cycle that maintains grasslands;
- propagating native grasses and forbs for further restoration (see box on page 19).

The aim is not to restore colour and beauty for their own sake, as one might in a cultivated garden, but rather to restore

Meadow restoration at Springle Nature Reserve



Photo: Toronto Bruce Trail Club

ecological relationships and the processes that sustain a healthy ecosystem. As a consequence, however, a restored native meadow provides a vibrant, multi-layered mosaic of shifting colors. The expanding palette of these restored meadows reflects the vast web of life they support.

A fall hike in a new light

The colours of a meadow tell a story about its biodiversity. Golds, purples, coppers, russets, and whites mark a landscape alive with activity, supporting busy pollinators, foraging mammals, hunting raptors and inconspicuous endangered butterflies. Restoring and protecting these sun-drenched grasslands helps ensure the diversity continues to thrive along the Niagara Escarpment.

This fall while you're enjoying the spectacular colours of the Bruce Trail, take a moment to pause and look closely at a meadow. You'll be rewarded with a new perspective on autumn along the Escarpment: a vibrant community of life hidden in plain sight. •

Growing the Colours of Meadow Restoration

Returning wild beauty and biodiversity to native meadow ecosystems on a large scale requires a reliable supply of locally appropriate native plants. As demand for these species grows, sourcing enough material from nurseries can be challenging. To support its restoration efforts the BTC has invested in growing its own native plants for seed collection.

The first of the BTC's "seed orchards", launched in 2020 at the McNally Nature Reserve, was created to specifically meet the needs of our meadow restoration projects. Since then, staff and volunteers have collected thousands of seeds from dozens of native species. Many of which have already been used in nearby restoration projects and are becoming established in their new homes.

New Jersey Tea – a target species and host plant of the endangered Mottled Duskywing – has had mixed survival success at the McNally Seed Orchard. Its seed pods can burst open before seeds are collected, and young plants are frequently browsed by deer and rabbits. To increase success, the BTC has partnered with the Gosling Research Institute for Plant Propagation (GRIPP) in Guelph which uses innovative biotechnology techniques to grow at-risk species.

By growing native plants today, BTC is helping ensure that the colours, inhabitants and ecological relationships of Escarpment meadows continue to flourish in the future.



What land has 50 words for ice and no highways?



Adventure
Canada

In Greenland, the sea is the road and the ice is alive. There are no highways between towns - just fjords, glaciers, and ancient routes guided by the rhythms of nature.

Sail from Iceland to Greenland into a world shaped by wind, ice, and wildlife. Spot humpbacks, minke, and other whales surfacing in the cold, clear Denmark Strait. Visit communities only accessible by boat. Hike the tundra with Inuit guides. Hear the language of a culture that's lived in balance with the Arctic for over 4,000 years.



\$500 off for The Bruce Trail Conservancy members. Visit advcan.ca/btc2 or scan the QR code to explore our available journeys. Call us at **1.800.363.7566**

Ilulissat, Greenland

© Martin Lipman





Finding Creativity and Camaraderie along the Bruce Trail

The artists of *Bruce Trail Inspired 3* share the subjects and colours that influence their work.

By Ali Schofield

Photo: Catherine Talbot

This fall, five artists are coming together to mount an exhibition that celebrates the vibrant beauty of the Bruce Trail.

The show, *Bruce Trail Inspired 3*, will feature over 50 works of art, each one a moment in time at a specific place along Canada's oldest and longest marked footpath. With their showcase just on the horizon, we connected with each of the artists – Victoria Pearce, Janet Jardine, Anne More, Cathy Lorroway, and Robert Peachey – to

learn about their backgrounds, understand their process as artists, and ask what places, features, and colours on the Bruce Trail inform their work.

The Trail sparks an idea

It's fair to say that the Bruce Trail has been an important influence on

Victoria Pearce for most of her life. Growing up in Hamilton, Pearce went on many hikes through the Iroquoia and Niagara sections with family and friends, from spots on Hamilton Mountain to Grindstone Creek where her father helped build the first footbridge over the water. "The Bruce Trail is a



I'll Follow You by Victoria Pearce



Turning Point by Janet Jardine

multi-generational treasure,” Pearce said. “Every person, every family, needs to spend time on the land.”

Like the painters she would connect with later in life, art was one of her passions from a young age. The Trail even influenced her early training as an artist: Pearce’s high school art teacher was noted painter, naturalist and early Bruce Trail supporter, Robert Bateman.

Today, Pearce is an award-winning artist whose works can be found across Hamilton, from hotels to the Stoney Creek branch of the Bank of Montreal to private residences. She is known for her eye-catching colours and labyrinthine technique, which makes her subjects feel alive with movement.

“I was teaching painting and I tripped on a new style while working on a landscape,” she explained. “I doubled back on a cloud with my brush and that was it. I’ve been developing the style over the last 12 years.”

In 2016, Pearce began going on informal Waterfall Wednesday hikes with her neighbour, long-time Iroquoia Club volunteer Peter Rumble. Each week, they visited one of the many cascades along the Bruce Trail. From Tiffany to Albion to Inglis Falls, Pearce’s ideas flowed like the water. It was on these hikes Pearce first considered developing a whole art show around scenes from the Bruce Trail, with

proceeds supporting the work of the Bruce Trail Conservancy.

As a member of the Burlington Fine Arts Association (BFAA), Pearce considered which other artists might be willing to join the potential exhibition.

“I looked for other members whose subjects were nature-based,” Pearce shared. “Janet Jardine and Anne More were the first that I approached.”

This is how the first *Bruce Trail Inspired* showcase was born.

Finding fellowship

Janet Jardine is an artist whose work marries her passions for nature and painting. After a departure from her career in the environmental sciences, she made her lifelong calling to photography and painting her primary focus. Her first painting featuring the Bruce Trail was symbolic of this new chapter.

“It’s called ‘Turning Points,’” Jardine said of the work depicting a bend in the Trail at Rattlesnake Point amid a canopy of early autumn leaves. “It’s about transitions, in life and on the Trail.”

Jardine feels called to depict the grand vistas seen from the top of the Escarpment, Trail scenes, and the personalities of individual trees. The latter is a subject fellow *Bruce Trail Inspired* painter **Anne More** also gravitates towards.

“I am in awe of the cedars along the Escarpment. They cling to next to nothing,” More said. “The fact that they are hundreds of years old really caught me. I am pulled to their resilience to weather and time.”

More was already an avid Bruce Trail explorer, hiking regularly with her daughters and grandchildren, when she came together with Pearce and Jardine for the first *Bruce Trail Inspired* show. In addition to offering time with loved ones, the Trail is so captivating to More it generates a creative compulsion.

“We paint because we have to paint. We feel like we have to share a certain moment,” More said. “We each have slightly different styles, so it’s interesting to understand how we each see something.” For More, the Bruce Trail is seen through deep layers of colour and the playfulness of light and shadow.

Giving back through art

A critical part of *Bruce Trail Inspired* for each artist was the determination to give back.

“Donating proceeds from the show feels right in my heart,” Jardine said. “We really appreciate the work that the Bruce Trail Conservancy does to protect lands and maintain them. This huge, connected conservation corridor is so important, especially in near-urban areas. It’s a refuge for wildlife and for people.”



Nature Lights the Way by Anne More

The first *Bruce Trail Inspired* show took place in the fall of 2020 at Burlington Centre. Included in the exhibition was a large map of the Bruce Trail with marks indicating the places along the Trail that are featured in each work. While it wasn't the conventional art show that may have first been imagined – the COVID pandemic necessitated masks, visitor limits, and Bruce Trail blazes to direct guests while supporting social distancing – the response from visitors was unanimously positive.

"We hoped that, in sharing our art and the stories, we could get people's attention," Jardine said. And that they did. The show was so well received, Pearce, Jardine, and More decided to plan another exhibition for 2023.

Partners in paint and pastels

For *Bruce Trail Inspired 2*, the group asked **Cathy Lorraway**, also member of the BFAA, to join them.

Lorraway, a former English, French and art teacher, started directing her energy toward the creation of ethereal paintings and pastels following her retirement in 2015. She describes the desire to pursue art as a tap on the shoulder that wouldn't stop.

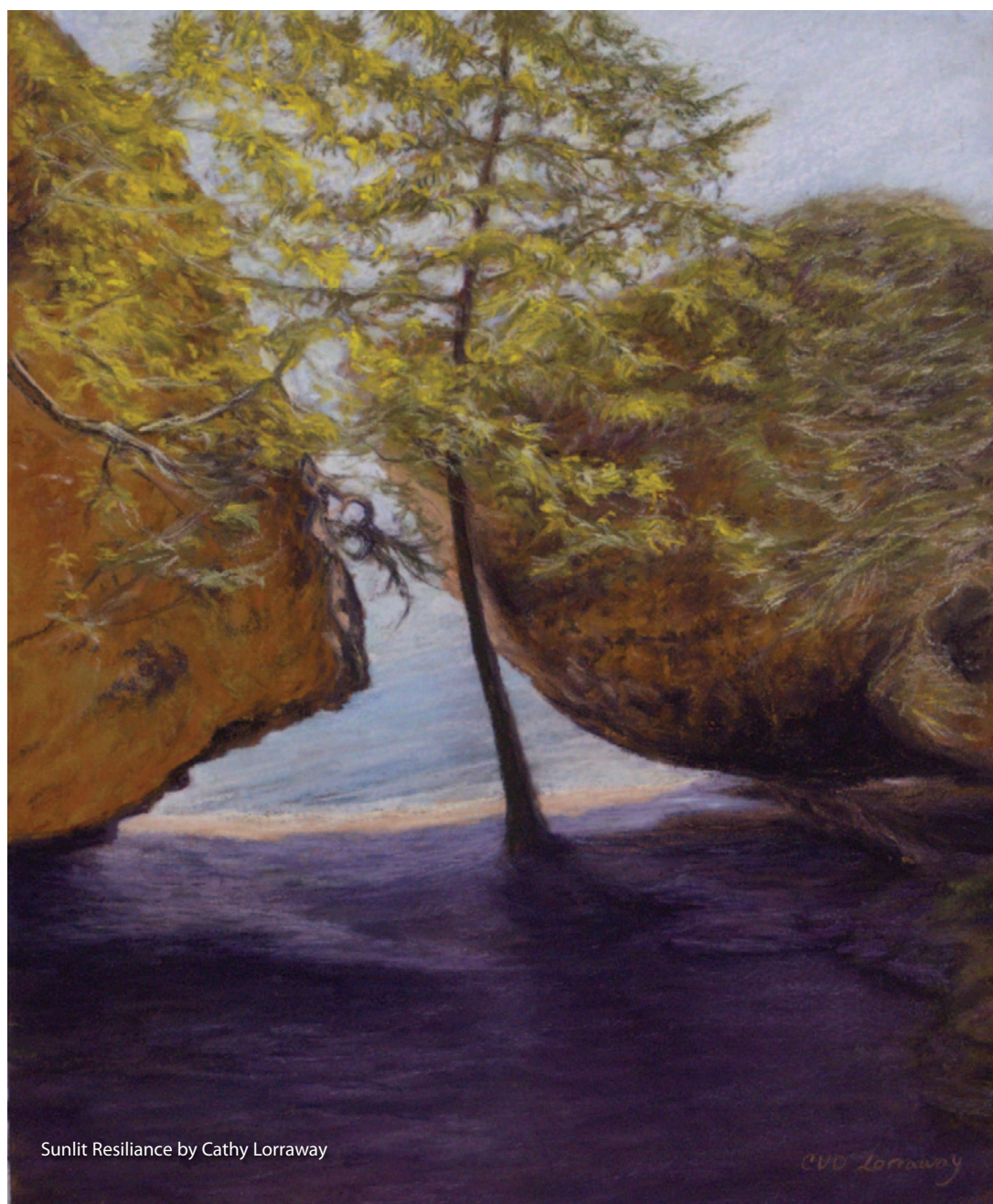
"I thought, if I don't go for it, I'm going to regret it," she said. Her dedication paid off: Lorraway is now an artist in residence at the Art Gallery of Burlington.

Along the Trail, Lorraway is moved by the character of the trees, the rush of waterfalls, and reflections in water, from the layers of earth beneath the surface to the canopy above. "The leaves in the sunlight create this beautiful lime green reflection," Lorraway said of her time doing plein air (outdoor) painting at Hilton Falls.

"Cathy does gorgeous pastels," Pearce remarked. "Everyone has their own style, which is important. We all have very different takes."

"It's just nice to bond with kindred spirits and have a little bit of fun," Lorraway said of her showcase collaborators. "When you're an artist, you spend a lot of the time painting alone in the studio out of necessity."

Together, the four artists shared new works for *Bruce Trail Inspired 2* in the fall of 2023, this time with more fanfare



Sunlit Resilience by Cathy Lorraway



On the way to the Grotto by Robert Peachey

permitted. Together, their efforts brought the total amount raised for the BTC through both shows up to \$11,000.

The *Bruce Trail Inspired* artists are currently planning their third exhibition, which will open on November 17 at the FirstOntario Arts Centre Milton. Joining them this year is painter **Robert Peachey**. Like his fellow artists, Peachey's love of the natural world runs deep: he was a landscape architect until his retirement.

He is attracted to the geography of the Niagara Escarpment, its services and caves, and the Carolinian forest.

"One of my haunts has always been Mount Nemo," Peachey says. "Growing up, that was always the prettiest part of the Bruce Trail."

When the *Bruce Trail Inspired* artists approached Peachey, he readily accepted the invitation to join the upcoming exhibition. He said he was drawn to the camaraderie of being with other like-minded artists and supporting the Trail's future.

"I appreciate the mission to introducing people to the Niagara Escarpment in a responsible way," Peachey said. "If we are going to reap the benefits of being in our urban wilderness, it has to be done in a way that won't destroy nature."

Artistic field trips

The *Bruce Trail Inspired* artists have a lot in common: they feel a connection to nature, have found a calling in creating striking works of art, and all reside near the Iroquoia section of the Bruce Trail. To broaden their artistic and hiking horizons, the group decided to travel to Tobermory this spring and explore the Bruce Trail together on the Saugeen (Bruce) Peninsula.

In every conversation for this article, each of the artists excitedly recounted their trip to the northern reaches of the Trail where they visited a different area every day. For a few in the group, this was their first visit to the Peninsula. They were fascinated by the shape of the rocks,

the cedars hanging from Escarpment cliffs, and even the unique perspective on the Trail from the waters of Georgian Bay.

Their excursion to the Peninsula did more than feed their creativity, it gave them time to reflect and connect with others who are passionate about the same two things: the Bruce Trail and art. The artists are now planning their next Bruce Trail road trip to visit the new Talisman Forest Nature Reserve and capture the Beaver Valley in all its autumn colours.

Be inspired

Bruce Trail Inspired 3 is your chance to see firsthand the perspectives, places and colours of the Bruce Trail as depicted by some of Ontario's greatest artistic talents. Their new works will be on display at the FirstOntario Arts Centre Milton from November 17 until December 6, 2026 with a portion of the proceeds from each piece sold supporting the Bruce Trail Conservancy. •

Conservation in Action: New Protected Areas

These six protected properties, recently added to our growing conservation corridor, reflect some of the many ways the Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC) secures land along the Niagara Escarpment.

Whether through relationships built with longtime neighbours and landowners, agreements with municipalities, or small but significant severances, the BTC's land securement toolbox is varied and growing. From 100-acre properties to 0.1-acre parcels, our dedicated staff and volunteers embrace flexibility and creativity in pursuit of a permanent home for the Bruce Trail and a protected Niagara Escarpment.

Acorn Nook – Niagara section

Map 1, Queenston Heights

0.1 acres | 48 metres of Bruce Trail Optimum Route

Acorn Nook is a tiny but mighty addition to the Bruce Trail conservation corridor. Located in Niagara-on-the-Lake, this wooded, triangular-shaped property sits on the edge of a flowing creek. Important for Trail continuity, the property also protects sensitive ecological features of the Escarpment. This includes species such as Chokecherry, Black Currant, Baltimore Oriole, American Toad, and towering Black Oaks from which the property got its name. In the springtime, ephemerals such as Trout Lily and Jack-in-the-Pulpit can be spotted along the forest floor.



Acorn Nook – Niagara section

Claremont Edge – Iroquoia section

Map 7, Hamilton

0.1 acres | 17 metres of Bruce Trail Optimum Route

This new addition to our corridor may be small but it represents an important connector in a busy urban area. Claremont Edge, sitting along the slope of Hamilton's Claremont Road Access, leads hikers up the "Mountain" (the name given to the Niagara Escarpment though Hamilton). Located near St. Joseph's Hospital next to BTC's Ryan property (protected in 2015), Claremont Edge is heavily forested, offering urban wildlife and people alike a quiet place to travel while connecting with nature in a bustling area. Its protection is important for Trail continuity through the city, keeping hikers off the road and on the Bruce Trail Optimum Route. Though not always considered the most scenic area, many people use the Bruce Trail in Hamilton daily to walk their dog, commute to work, and travel through the city. That means that, though small, securing this piece of Trail improves the daily experience of Hamiltonians and Bruce Trail hikers alike.

Town of The Blue Mountains property – Blue Mountains section

Map 24, Blue Mountains

0.7 acres | 116 metres of Bruce Trail Optimum Route

Thanks to a generous donation from the Town of The Blue Mountains, the Bruce Trail has secured a short but critical section of the 15th Sideroad unopened road allowance. This acquisition will eventually provide a new home for the Bruce Trail in the Scenic Caves area.

Once the Trail is relocated onto this densely wooded property, hikers will be able to avoid Grey Road 119, improving both safety and the overall Trail experience. The reroute will also move the Trail away from local residences, helping to strengthen relationships with neighbouring landowners.

While modest in size, this property plays an important role in a larger vision. It represents an important step in eventually removing the Trail from Scenic Caves Road and creating a more natural and protected route.

Special thanks to BTC volunteers Linda, Bev and Dave who helped secure this property and work through the challenging puzzle of finding an appropriate route for the Trail.

Amber Crest (expansion) – Peninsula section

Map 37, Hope Bay

9 acres | 171 metres of Bruce Trail Optimum Route

Amber Crest (expansion) is the latest addition in a string of properties the Bruce Trail Conservancy has secured south of Cape Dundas Nature Reserve and nearly doubles the size of the Amber Crest protected natural area (announced in the spring 2026 issue).

Amber Crest (expansion) features high-quality interior forest that provides habitat for a wide range of wildlife, including area-sensitive bird species such as Ovenbird, American Redstart, and Black-and-white Warbler. The property also features cliff and



Amber Crest (expansion) – Peninsula section

Photo: Brian Popelier

talus habitats, dense White Cedar forest, and a short stretch of cobblestone shoreline on Georgian Bay. The caves and cliff communities offer sheltered sites for several overwintering bat species.

This newly protected property is part of an ecological corridor stretching 57 km along the Escarpment from Warton to Lion's Head. Signs of Black Bear underscore the importance of this large, relatively undisturbed tract of Escarpment habitat.

MapleCross Nature Reserve at Lion's Haven – Peninsula section *Map 38, Lion's Head*

100 acres | 0 metres of Bruce Trail Optimum Route

On the Saugeen (Bruce) Peninsula, this lush, wooded property lies adjacent to Lion's Head Provincial Park and the BTC-managed Warder property. MapleCross Nature Reserve at Lion's Haven adds 100 acres of ecologically valuable Niagara Escarpment land to our growing conservation corridor and creates a buffer around existing parkland, ensuring large tracts of wilderness are available for local species to thrive.



MapleCross Nature Reserve at Lion's Haven – Peninsula section

Photo: Brian Popelier

This new nature reserve is home to a variety of important habitats, including interior forest, an increasingly rare ecosystem that provides critical refuge for species such as Black Bears, Fishers, and migratory birds that nest in the region. The property also features vernal pools – crucial breeding habitat for amphibians.

While no Bruce Trail Optimum Route crosses the property, it is skirted by the Warder Side Trail and Ilse Hanel Side Trail. The land offers strong potential for future Side Trail development, further enhancing the Bruce Trail experience in this popular hiking destination.

Special thanks to our longtime partners in conservation, MapleCross for supporting this nature reserve at Lion's Haven.



Yellow Lady's Slipper at Whippoorwill Stand - Peninsula section

Photo: Brian Popelier

Whippoorwill Stand - Peninsula section

Map 38, Lion's Head

10 acres | 100 metres of Bruce Trail Optimum Route

Whippoorwill Stand overlooks Whippoorwill Bay on the Saugeen (Bruce) Peninsula, at the corner of Forty Hills Road and Swan Lake Lane. This newly protected area offers the opportunity to remove the Bruce Trail from Isthmus Bay Road and reroute it through forested terrain.

Sitting next to 75 acres of previously secured BTC-managed lands, Whippoorwill Stand expands our conservation impact. In an area dominated by cottages and residential development, protecting this land ensures that wildlife in the area has room to thrive. This includes species at risk like Eastern Whippoorwill, Eastern Wood Pewee, and Massasauga Rattlesnake.

Whippoorwill Stand primarily features coniferous forest dominated by Eastern White Cedar, Balsam Fir, and White Spruce with White Birch and Trembling Aspen. The understory is dominated by Round-leaved Dogwood and Buffaloberry, while the ground layer includes mosses, Fringed Polygala, Bearberry, Sarsaparilla, Large-leaved Aster, and Bracken fern. •

What's in Your Pack?

With Plein Air Painter Ray Ramjattan

For Ray Ramjattan, painting outdoors comes naturally with the right supplies and a sense of wonder.

Ray started painting just over five years ago, but it wasn't until moving to Hamilton in 2024 that he discovered what is now known as the Hamilton Plein Air Arts Collective, an informal group of artists who paint together outdoors. Although sharing his work with a group was initially intimidating, Ray saw it as an opportunity to connect with Hamilton's arts community while spending time outdoors and easing his social anxiety. Ray now co-leads the group, which meets every weekend at various locations throughout Hamilton, including along the Bruce Trail.

In this latest installment of "What's In Your Pack?" we asked Ray about his must-have items when he heads out to paint.

Paints

Ray prefers to use oil paints but will use acrylic and watercolour from time to time. He finds that different paint types will act differently depending on the weather, adding another element to the work. For example, oil paints are more difficult when the weather is cold, and acrylic will dry very quickly in the heat. Whichever paint type he chooses, Ray brings just a few colours, keeping it minimal to keep his pack light. Typically, that means bringing a warm and cool tone of each primary colour, a white, and a few guest colours, depending on the location and season. "Phthalo Green is my secret weapon," Ray says, and it is often in his kit.

Canvas

Every artist needs something to paint on. Ray prefers using canvas panels, which are thin, rigid painting surfaces that offer less bounce than stretched canvas. He also occasionally uses oil paper for variety. Both are easy to carry when painting outdoors.

Easel

One of the biggest things that Ray carries to the Trail when plein air painting is his easel. This includes a setup with a tripod, palette, and mast or support holder. Ray

has customized his easel to suit his needs, and each artist in the group has their own unique setup. Some artists bring an old table, while others have easels that are decades old – whatever works best for them! Ray's holds both his painting and his supplies, allowing him to work comfortably outdoors.

Brushes

Ray usually brings four or five paintbrushes of varying sizes. He typically prefers long-handled flat brushes because they are very versatile.

Solvent

Ray uses Gamsol as a solvent for cleaning his brushes and thinning paint. He prefers Gamsol because it is odourless and doesn't bother his dogs at home, unlike other, stronger solvents. Ray makes sure to bring



Photo: Ray Ramjattan



Photo: Ray Ramjattan

Plein Air Painter Ray Ramjattan

it in a sealed jar so that it doesn't leak in his pack. The whole group makes a point of leaving no solvent or paint behind and always cleaning up after themselves, striving to leave the Trail better than they found it.

Layers

While the group always checks the forecast before heading out, Ray always wears layers and brings extra with him, to

be ready for anything. This includes a waterproof raincoat, a hat for sun protection or warmth, gloves, and thermal socks. Standing in one spot for two or three hours, you never know how your body will feel over time or how the weather will change. He also brings an umbrella that attaches to his easel to protect his work in case of rain.

Phone

Ray brings his phone for a few reasons. He photographs his chosen scene before he begins painting to capture the original lighting conditions, helping him stay true to the moment rather than chasing the changing light throughout the session, which is a challenge when plein air painting. He also brings headphones and listens to a classical playlist on his phone to get into the zone.

And finally ...

When asked for one last piece of advice, Ray noted that anyone looking to start plein air painting should bring "a sense of wonder and a good eye to your surroundings." Painting allows you to take

in the nature around you and see it through a different lens.

For those in the Hamilton area who are interested in joining the Hamilton Plein Air Arts Collective, Ray encourages you to do so. The group is always open to new members, and all ages and skill levels are welcome. You can find them on Instagram: [@hamiltonpleinairartscollective](https://www.instagram.com/hamiltonpleinairartscollective) •



Photo: Ray Ramjattan



Photo: Ray Ramjattan

Hamilton Plein Air Arts Collective group outing

Talisman Forest Nature Reserve

Help us cross the finish line!



Thanks to the generosity and support of Bruce Trail Conservancy donors and community members, we have made incredible strides toward meeting our \$7.5 million goal to protect and restore Talisman Forest Nature Reserve.

Already, the \$1.5 million match from Environment and Climate Change Canada has been met, thanks to nature lovers and hikers alike who have made donations towards this iconic piece of the Niagara Escarpment.

The finish line is now in sight.

There is still \$1.3 million left to raise, and we need your support to reach this goal. Will you help us get there with a donation today?

Be part of this monumental moment in Bruce Trail history. Your gift today will help complete this landmark conservation effort and transform this incredible property into a thriving nature reserve.

Your donation will:

- Secure 134 acres of Niagara Escarpment land
- Remove the former ski resort structures and begin remediation
- Protect 885 metres of Bruce Trail
- Reforest the former ski slopes, representing the only gap in forest canopy in a 10-kilometre stretch of the Escarpment
- Restore habitat for iconic wildlife and species at risk, including Eastern Meadowlark, Butternut, and Barn Swallow
- Enhance vital ecological services, including air and water filtration, flood mitigation, and carbon storage

Together, we can protect this ecologically significant landscape and make it accessible to explore via the Bruce Trail, forever.



EASTERN MEADOWLARK

Donate today at brucetrail.org/talisman or by phone at 1-800-665-4453 or by mailing the form below to Bruce Trail Conservancy, PO Box 857, Hamilton, ON L8N 3N9

Yes, I want to restore and protect Talisman Forest Nature Reserve!

Enclosed is my: ☐ Monthly Gift: ☐ \$ _____ / month
☐ One-time Gift: ☐ \$250 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$ _____ other

Payment by: ☐ Cheque (payable to The Bruce Trail Conservancy or marked "Void" if setting up a monthly donation) ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa

Card #: _____ Expiry Date: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Member# _____ Email: _____

☐ I am interested in learning more about making a gift to the Bruce Trail Conservancy in my will. ☐ I have included the Bruce Trail Conservancy in my will.
If donations to the profiled property exceeds the required funds, your donation will be used to secure and steward other lands within the Bruce Trail's conservation corridor.

BTC Becomes Rainbow Registered

The Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC) and its nine Clubs are pleased to announce we have been designated as a Rainbow Registered organization.

This nationally recognized accreditation, awarded through the Canadian Queer Chamber of Commerce (CQCC) and Tourism HR Canada, recognizes organizations that meet high standards for creating a welcoming and safe environment for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.



Achieving “Rainbow Registered” status reflects the collective commitment and efforts of the BTC and its Clubs to foster an inclusive experience for 2SLGBTQIA+ people through progressive policies, practices and training. Over the past several years, the BTC has made dedicated efforts to promote inclusivity and belonging at all levels of the organization, both internally and externally. Throughout the year, Bruce Trail Clubs host a variety of 2SLGBTQIA+ friendly and queer-led programs, including Rainbow Hikes and outreach at local Pride celebrations across the Niagara Escarpment.

For more than 60 years, the BTC has been connecting communities to nature along the Niagara Escarpment. Our mission, ‘*preserving a ribbon of wilderness, for everyone, forever*’ reflects a promise of inclusion. The BTC believes everyone should have the opportunity to

Celebrate Pride with the BTC Year-Round

Whether on the Trail or at a Pride event, we invite you to join us. Browse upcoming events and organized hikes at brucetrail.org/pride-2026



Sydenham and Peninsula Clubs at Owen Sound Pride

experience the Bruce Trail and help shape its future while feeling welcomed, comfortable, and safe, whether they are participating in self-guided adventures, organized hikes, or volunteer activities.

By building relationships with local 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, developing special programming, and continually learning new ways to advance our commitment to inclusion, the BTC will continue fostering belonging and celebrating diversity. •

Show your support with a BTC Pride Badge

Request your free badge while supplies last at brucetrail.org/request-a-btc-pride-badge



Toronto Bruce Trail Club Rainbow Hike

Bruce Trail Hike-a-thon 2026

Record-setting participation and fundraising made this year's Hike-a-thon a wonderful success.

This past May, 87 participants laced up their boots in support of the Bruce Trail Conservancy as part of the month-long Bruce Trail Hike-a-thon. The annual event challenges participants to set hiking and fundraising goals for the month and share their love for the Trail while competing for prizes. This year, more hikers than ever signed up to be part of the Hike-a-thon fun.

Together, Hike-a-thoners logged many kilometres while raising funds for the BTC's Trail Development and Maintenance Fund 1182 & 1183. This fund supports the building and upkeep of Bruce Trail structures, including boardwalks, bridges, staircases, stiles, signage and more, helping ensure the Trail remains safe and enjoyable for years to come.

Thanks to the dedication and enthusiasm of this year's participants, the 2026 Hike-a-thon raised over \$55,000, more than any previous Hike-a-thon. Even better, every dollar raised has been matched by anonymous donors, doubling the event's impact.



Thank you to everyone who participated in Hike-a-thon 2026 and all those who supported Hike-a-thoners and the Bruce Trail Conservancy with a donation. We look forward to welcoming everyone back next year. Keep an eye on our social media channels and *Bruce Trail Conservancy Magazine* for future Hike-a-thon updates and details. •



Hike-a-thon 2026 Prize Winners:

- Most Funds Raised by an Individual: Smadar Junkin
- Most Funds Raised by a Team: The Strolling Stones SBTC Volunteers
- Fundraising Draw Winner: Freddy Wang
- Weekly Draw Winners: Rachel, Smadar, Steven, and Satomi

Thank you to Baffin, Blue Mountain Resort, Hockley Valley Resort, KEEN Canada, Krista McMillan, and Vintage Hotels for your generous prize donations.

Why Hike-a-thon? Hike-a-thoners Share Their Motivations...

"Here to play a small part in the protection, health, and longevity of a trail that I love. I have enjoyed the Bruce Trail and hope that those coming along after me will be able to enjoy it as well." – Syel G.

"Hiking on the Bruce Trail has supported my mental and physical wellbeing over the years and has provided opportunity for me to connect more deeply with nature, friends, family and myself ... I am fundraising to help preserve this slice of paradise to years to come." – Jessica D.

"I've joined the Bruce Trail Hike-a-thon because this trail has shaped how I see the land. Along the Niagara Escarpment, I've come to understand the stories held in stone, forest, and water – stories that stretch back long before us. This challenge is my way of giving back to a place that has given me so much." – Annette S.

"If all goes to plan, I'll be finishing my first End-to-End of the trail this month, which has been 11 years in the making! With this milestone on the horizon I've been thinking a lot about the ways I want to give back to the Trail." – Christine E.



Donating Securities:

Creating lasting impact with a tax-effective gift

Stephen has hiked across the top of the former Talisman Mountain Resort many times over the years, so he was thrilled when he heard that the Bruce Trail Conservancy had secured the property and would be permanently protecting and restoring its ecosystems.

As a long-standing member, volunteer and monthly donor, Stephen has supported the Bruce Trail Conservancy's mission for decades. When the opportunity arose to help protect the Talisman property, he decided to deepen that commitment by making a gift of securities – a donation that allowed him to have an even greater impact while receiving significant tax benefits.

“The Talisman property inspired me to reach my next level of giving. It was an opportunity to support a wonderful acquisition while saving considerably on taxes.

“My securities had experienced a significant capital gain over time. I knew that if I were to sell the shares, I would be taxed 50% on the gain. By gifting them directly to the Bruce Trail Conservancy rather than selling them, the capital gains tax was eliminated.

“I also received a full tax credit for the donation, and the amazing feeling that comes with knowing I've helped secure precious Escarpment land in an area experiencing development pressures.”

Learn more about donating securities at brucetrail.org/ways-to-give/#Gifts-of-Securities



Photo: C/o Stephen K.



Adventure
Canada

JOURNEYS FOR THE CURIOUS

How did the search for a northern route change what the world thought it knew?

Long before European explorers sought a route between two great oceans, Inuit knew these northern waters as home, navigating by sea ice, stars, and story. Their deep knowledge shaped every map that followed. When European expeditions arrived in search of the fabled Northwest Passage, they entered a world already charted through generations of memory and experience. Today, the Passage remains a place where traditional knowledge and adventure meet, revealing that discovery begins by listening to those who were here first.



\$500 off for The Bruce Trail Conservancy members. Visit advcan.ca/btc2 or scan the qr code to explore our available journeys. Call us at 1.800.363.7566

Northwest Passage

© Scott Forsyth

TICO Reg# 4001400

Trail Changes & Notices

JUNE – AUGUST 2026, POST EDITION 31

FOR THE LATEST TRAIL CHANGE AND NOTICES, VISIT BRUCETRAIL.ORG/TRAIL_CHANGES

Trail Changes & Notices are online and in the Bruce Trail App

Visit brucetrail.org/trail_changes for the latest changes, searchable by Map Number, Club Section, and even by text in the description.

Download the **Bruce Trail App** to have the most up-to-date trail data on your mobile device.

Parking Reservations Required

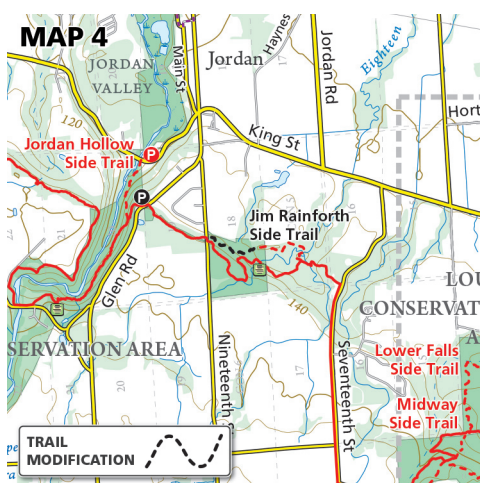
Seasonal paid parking and required reservations are in place at some parks and conservation areas along the Bruce Trail. For details visit brucetrail.org/explore-the-trail/#parking-and-transportation

NIAGARA

Map 4 - Jim Rainforth Side Trail, reroute

A segment of the Jim Rainforth Side Trail has been slightly rerouted to avoid a wet section of trail.

New side trail length = 960 m



IROQUOIA

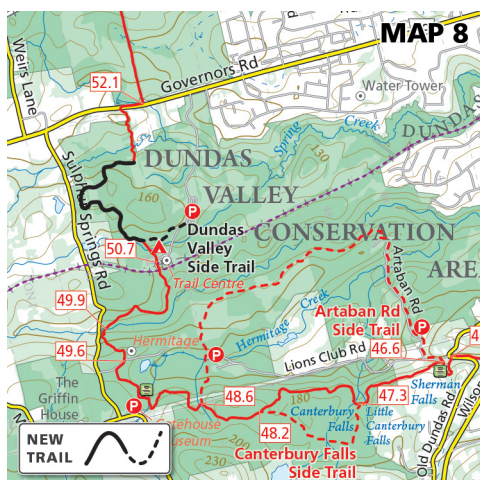
Map 8 – Dundas Valley Side Trail and reroute

A portion of main Bruce Trail in Dundas Valley Conservation Area has been rerouted and a new side trail has been established leading to a parking area (P3), providing vehicular access off Governors Rd.

Decommissioned Main Trail = 740 metres (not displayed on map)

New Main Trail = 1.2 km

Dundas Valley Side Trail = 330 metres

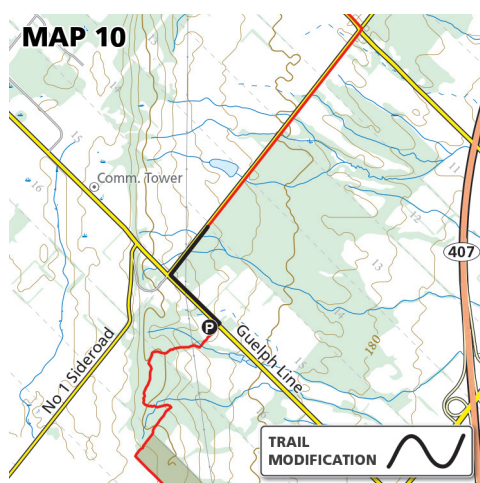


Map 10 – Guelph Line and No 1 Sideroad, reroute

The main Bruce Trail at Guelph Line and No. 1 Sideroad has been rerouted.

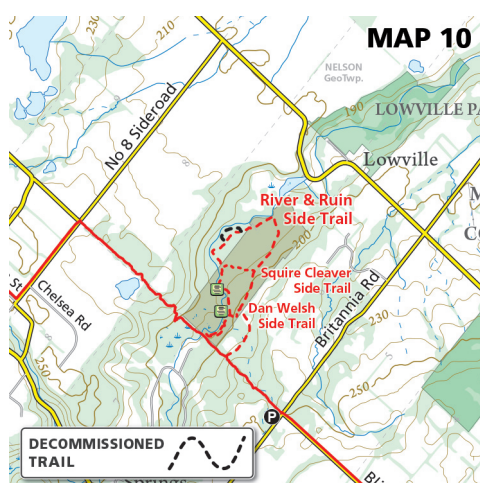
Old Main Trail distance = 820 metres

New Main Trail distance = 820 metres



Map 10 – River & Ruin Side Trail low water route decommissioned

The low water route on the River & Ruin Side Trail has been decommissioned.



TORONTO

Map 13 – Silver Creek area, reconfiguration and new parking

Following the BTC's acquisition of two new protected natural areas in the Silver Creek area, a major trail reconfiguration has taken place and two new recommended parking

locations have been confirmed.

This reconfiguration has routed the Main Trail on a more natural route, removing 1.2 km of trail from Sixth Line and a further 720 metres from a stretch paralleling Highway 7.

TRAIL DISTANCES

New Main Trail = 7.8 km

Sixth Line Side Trail = 480 metres

Beeney Creek Side Trail = 820 metres

Snows Creek Side Trail = 3.6 km

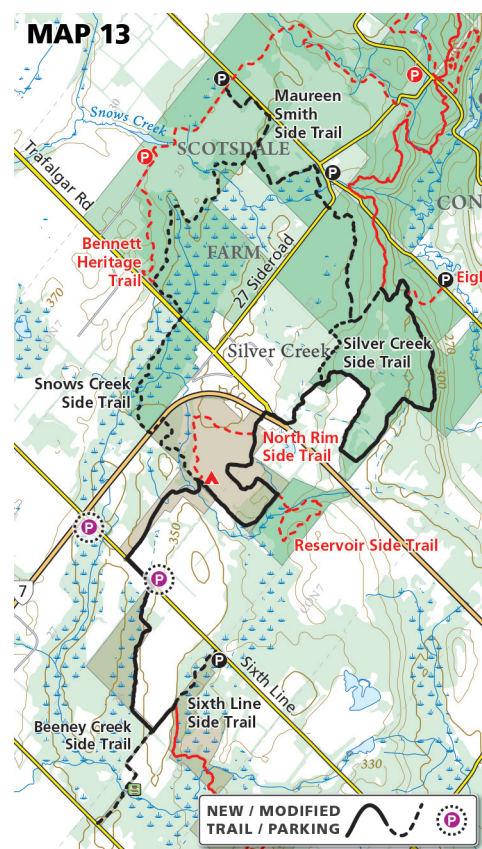
Silver Creek Side Trail = 620 metres

Maureen Smith Side Trail = 2.9 km

NEW ROADSIDE PARKING

- 1) Sixth Line south: East side of Sixth Line, opposite the point where the main Trail meets the road; 5 car capacity; N 43.662205°, W 79.990407°
- 2) Sixth Line north: West side of Sixth Line, immediately south of Highway 7; 3 car capacity; N 43.666155°, W 79.995902°

To be legally parked, all cars must be completely off the pavement and on the shoulder of the road.

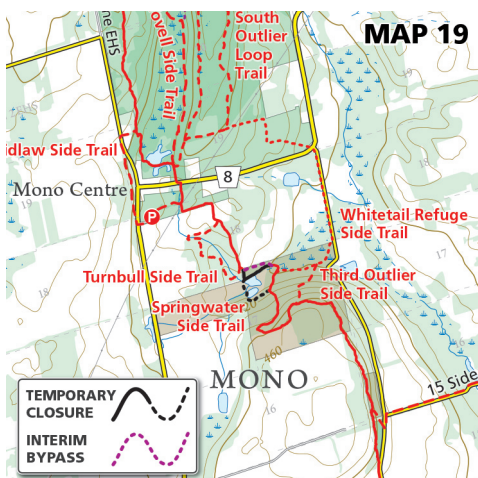


CALEDON HILLS

Map 19 – Whitetail Refuge Nature Reserve, temporary reroute

In preparation for a stream restoration project on BTC's Whitetail Refuge Nature Reserve, the main Bruce Trail has been rerouted on the property, and the Springwater Side Trail is temporarily closed. For details on the stream restoration, visit brucetrail.org/whitetail-refuge-stream-restoration.

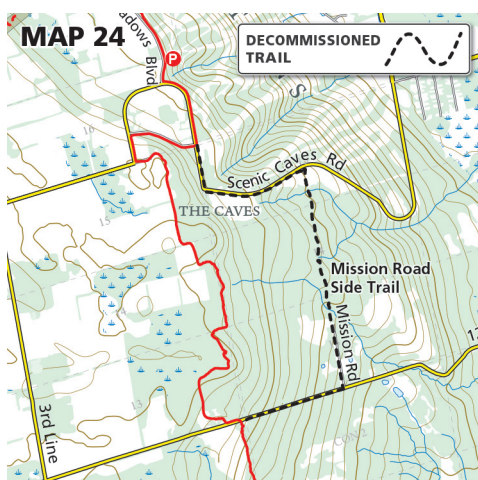
Interim Bypass = 190 metres



BLUE MOUNTAINS

Map 24 – Mission Side Trail decommissioned

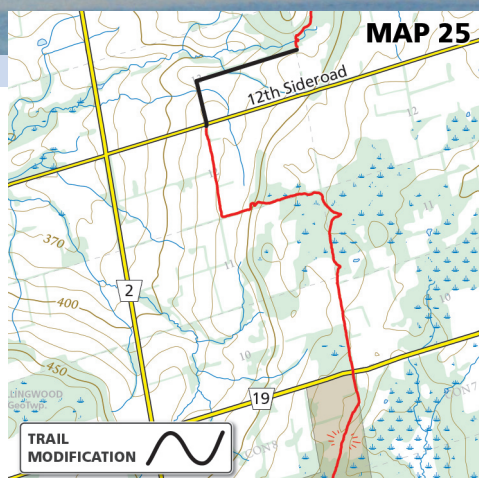
The Mission Road Side Trail has been decommissioned.



BEAVER VALLEY

Map 25 - 12th Sideroad, reroute

Thanks to the exceptional generosity of a local landowner, a safer and more scenic trail experience is now open to the public. This reroute has removed 680 metres of trail from the shoulder of 12th Sideroad.

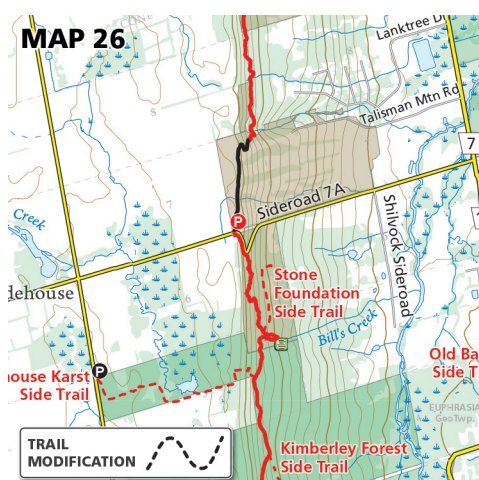


Map 26 – Talisman Forest Nature Reserve, reroute

The main Bruce Trail at Talisman Forest Nature Reserve has been rerouted slightly to provide a better hiking experience.

Old Main Trail distance = 802 metres

New Main Trail distance = 735 metres



PENINSULA

Map 38 – Williams Caves area, temporary closure

Bannister's Hill Side Trail is closed until further notice.

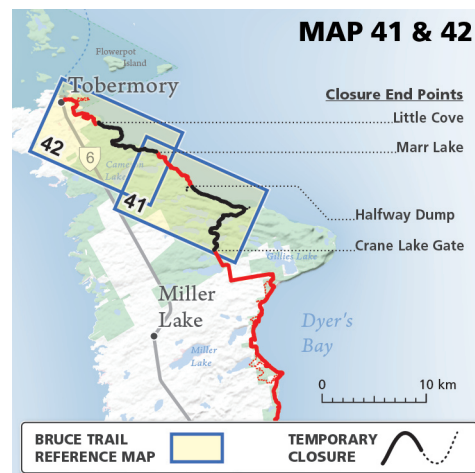


Maps 41 & 42 - Bruce Peninsula National Park, temporary closures

Two sections of the main Bruce Trail within Bruce Peninsula National Park will be closed Oct. 30-Nov. 23, 2026 inclusive, while hunting and harvesting by Saugeen Ojibway Nation are underway.

The temporarily closed sections are:

1. Crane Lake Road (km 125.4) to Halfway Dump Side Trail (km 139.5)
2. Junction with Marr Lake Trail (km 145.3) to Little Cove (km 156.1) •





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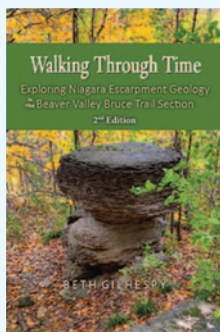
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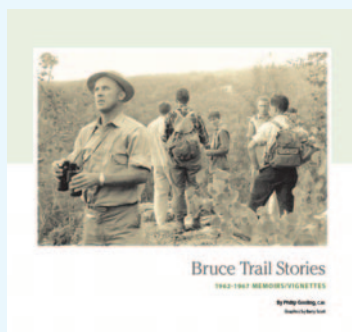
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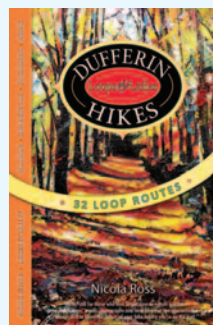
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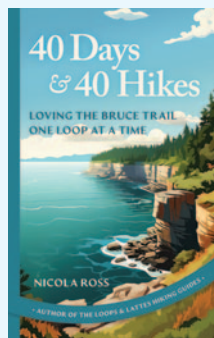
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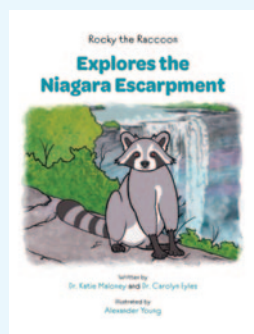
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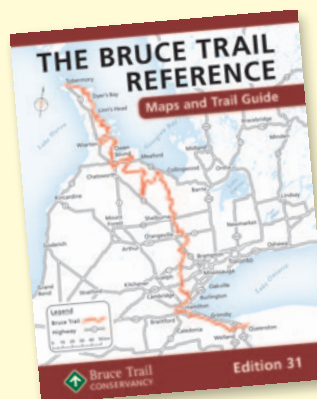


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A photograph of a person and a child hiking away from the camera on a forest trail. The ground is covered in a thick layer of fallen autumn leaves in shades of yellow, orange, and brown. The forest is filled with tall, thin trees, many of which have yellowing leaves. The person is wearing a backpack and a hat, and the child is wearing a blue jacket and orange pants. The scene is bathed in warm, golden light, suggesting late afternoon or early morning.

Bruce Trail Day – October 4, 2026

Together on the Trail

Join us at one of nine free Bruce Trail Day events this October 4 to celebrate our incredible Trail and the many ways it brings communities and nature together.

Learn more inside on page 8 or visit brucetrail.org/bruce-trail-day-2026



Bruce Trail
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