



Bruce Trail CONSERVANCY

Health and Safety Information for Volunteers

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Table of Contents

Overview	2
General Outdoor Safety	2
Location Awareness	2
Personal Safety and Equipment.....	3
Environmental Hazards	3
Reporting Hazards and Emergencies	3
Preparing for a Group Outdoor Activity	4
Safety Briefing	4
Incident Reporting	5
Weather	6
Heat and Summer Weather	6
Cold and Winter Weather	8
Other Significant Weather Events	9
Terrain, Wildlife and Plants	11
Terrain	11
Wildlife	11
Plants.....	14
Summary and Best Practices	18
Link to Knowledge Check Quiz	18

OVERVIEW

This health and safety document is intended for Bruce Trail volunteers who are volunteering in an outdoor capacity, including but not limited to hike leaders, trail maintenance volunteers, trail captains, land stewards, and others. The content is tailored towards those leading group outdoor activities, but offers information relevant to any volunteer working outdoors. It is intended to provide information on potential hazards and situations one may encounter while on the Bruce Trail, and safe practices while working outdoors or leading outdoor events.

This manual is designed to provide guidelines and best practices, rather than serving as formal policy, and volunteers are encouraged to use their best judgement based on the circumstances to make final decisions with regard to safety and comfort of all participants.

In certain circumstances, it may be of best interest to cancel and/or postpone an outdoor activity. For specific recommendations, please review the [Summary and Recommended Best Practices for Volunteer Group Outdoor Activities](#) section of this document (page 18).

GENERAL OUTDOOR SAFETY

When working outdoors, always proceed with caution. Move carefully, take your time, and use common sense.

Buddy System: Whenever possible, use the buddy system and work with a partner. If you choose to go out alone, inform a friend, partner, or family member of your planned location, the nature of your activity, and your expected return time.

Location Awareness

- Always remain aware of your location and ensure you can clearly describe it in an emergency.
- Consider using the free *what3words* app to identify, share, and save precise locations
- The BTC app can also help pinpoint your exact location on the Trail; be sure to download offline maps before heading out.
- Always carry a cell phone and understand its capabilities.
- Test reception when you arrive; many trail areas have limited or no service, so plan accordingly. In an emergency, if you do not have a phone or cannot get a signal, use the universal distress signal of three short calls (audible or visual) repeated at regular intervals.

Personal Safety and Equipment

- Carry a whistle (recommended as standard safety gear) and a flashlight for signaling.
- Carry a basic first aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries such as scrapes, blisters, and sprains.
- Always bring a map of the area and a compass or GPS equipped device (and ensure that it is charged).
- Wear appropriate clothing for conditions, including:
 - Sturdy footwear (e.g., hiking boots)
 - Sun protection (hat, sunscreen)
 - Insect repellent
 - Required personal protective equipment (e.g., safety glasses, hard hats, if applicable)
- Ensure you have enough drinking water to stay properly hydrated.

Environmental Hazards

- Do not attempt to climb cliffs or enter caves or crevices.
- Maintain a safe distance from cliff edges.
- Be alert for hazards such as standing dead trees (“chicots”), dead limbs, or hanging branches.
- Check your body for ticks after completing your activity.
- Be aware of local hunting seasons; avoid the area when hunting is active. Although hunting is not permitted on BTC properties, it may occur on adjacent lands, and bullets can travel far distances. If you do go out, wear high-visibility clothing such as blaze orange.

Reporting Hazards and Emergencies

If you encounter or observe hazardous or threatening situations (such as off-road vehicles, fire, weapons, illegal hunting or trapping, or unknown hazardous materials):

- Immediately move to a safe location
- Contact BTC staff and/or emergency services, as appropriate

Do not attempt to confront individuals engaged in unsafe or illegal activities. Your safety must always come first.

PREPARING FOR A GROUP OUTDOOR ACTIVITY

All organized activities including guided hikes, public events, and volunteer work parties (e.g., trail work, cleanups, construction or removal projects), should have a designated Leader. The Leader is responsible for overall group safety and coordination.

The Leader or event organizer should ensure that:

- A fully stocked first aid kit is available on site, and all participants know its location.
- At least one participant with first aid training is identified to the group at the start of the activity.

Safety Briefing

At the beginning of the activity, the Leader should review:

- General and site-specific safety considerations.
- The planned route or work area.
- Potential hazards (e.g., uneven terrain, sharp objects, weather conditions).
- Proper tool use (if applicable). Most of the Clubs have a stock of commonly used tools and safety equipment. However, some volunteers who go out to work on the properties may find it more convenient to have their own basic equipment.
- Required protective equipment (should be provided by Club or brought from home).

For cleanup activities:

- Assess the types of materials present.
- Identify hazardous materials (e.g., sharp objects, chemicals, biohazards, unknown liquids).
- Do not handle hazardous or unidentified materials—report them to staff.

For chainsaw use or tree felling:

- All individuals present must have signed the [BTC Chainsaw Policy Acknowledgement Form](#) after reviewing the [BTC Operation of Chainsaws and Training Policy](#), regardless of their role.
- Hard hats must be worn at all times by everyone in the area.
- Standing dead trees (“chicots”) must be removed before work begins, or the work area must be relocated outside their falling range.

Incident Reporting

An incident reporting form should be completed for any incident which:

- occurs on or adjacent to the Bruce Trail, or
- occurs on BTC-managed property, or
- occurs at a BTC led or organized activity

An incident is defined as:

- any injury that requires medical treatment in a hospital, or
- a death, or
- a situation in which Emergency Services (Police, Fire, Emergency Medical Services) are called
- property damage caused by a BTC-organized activity.

Report the incident to your Club Board as soon as possible. Complete an [incident reporting form](#) (available from your director, BTC head office, or website) and submit the completed form to the BTC head office.

WEATHER

General Safety Practices (All Group Activities)

Always:

- Ensure all participants have adequate drinking water.
- Encourage sunscreen use and wearing a hat in sunny weather.
- Ensure clothing is appropriate for weather and conditions.
- Conduct regular group check-ins and adjust plans based on participant well-being.
- Take breaks as needed.

Check the forecast regularly before a planned outdoor activity. Environment Canada provides a reliable, accurate forecast via their website [here](#) or through their app [here](#). Local conservation authorities will also provide updates for local conditions via websites and social media.

Heat and Summer Weather

If air temperature >30°C and/or humidex >35°C:

- Inform participants about signs and symptoms of heat-related illness.
- Choose shaded routes or work areas where possible.
- Reduce intensity (slower pace, shorter duration).
- Take hydration breaks at least every 20 minutes.
- Reassess group condition before the halfway point.
- Stop the activity and seek medical attention if anyone shows signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke.

If air temperature >35°C and/or humidex >40°C, strongly consider cancelling or postponing the activity.

Dry hot summers are common along the Bruce Trail. Water may be scarce on humid days, sweat does not evaporate well, and people face the danger of heat stroke and heat exhaustion if proper precautions are not taken. The best measures against heat emergencies are wearing a hat and sunscreen, and staying well hydrated by drinking plenty of water.

The following are the most common types of health concerns during heat events:

	Symptoms	Suggested Treatment
Sunburn	• Red, inflamed skin that is hot to the touch	• Apply cool, damp cloths to the affected area or take a cool bath

	• Pain or tenderness and itching • Swelling and small blisters in more severe cases	• Apply aloe vera gel • NSAIDs (such as ibuprofen) can reduce swelling and alleviate pain • Hydrate and avoid further sun exposure
Heat Cramps	• Pain and muscle spasms in legs, calves, abdominal wall, back and/or arms	• Stop physical activity and rest in a cool, shaded spot • Consume fluids – water, or sports drink with electrolytes (without caffeine) • Gently massage and stretch the affected muscle
Heat Exhaustion	• Feeling faint or dizzy, feelings of nausea • Low blood pressure and/or a rapid, weak heart rate • Cool, moist, pale skin accompanied by a low grade fever • Heat cramps • Fatigue • Headache • Heavy sweating • Dark coloured urine (a sign of dehydration)	• Find shade or a cooler area • Hydrate with water and electrolytes if available • If access to water, wet down clothing and skin to cool the body • Lay down and rest <i>Anyone experiencing significant heat exhaustion should consider being checked out by a medical professional.</i>
Heatstroke	*Untreated heat exhaustion can turn into heatstroke • Sweating has stopped • Skin is hot to the touch • Rapid, shallow breathing and heart rate • Nausea and dizziness • Irritability, confusion • Loss of consciousness	• Seek medical attention immediately – this is an emergency • Seek shade, and cool down with water on clothes and body • Hydration with water and electrolytes if conscious

Cold and Winter Weather

Cold and winter weather can create conditions that may make hiking or outdoor work more challenging or potentially unsafe. To be prepared in cold/winter weather conditions, always:

- Ensure participants stay hydrated (hydration is still essential in cold weather).
- Encourage layered clothing to regulate body temperature.
- Recommend traction devices (e.g., icers) and hiking poles.
- Conduct regular check-ins and monitor for cold-related concerns.

In preparing for an organized activity or hike, it is important to also consider how weather conditions can affect travel to the trail. If heavy snowfall or other conditions could impact road conditions during the time directly before, or after, an organized activity that may make it challenging or unsafe for participants to get to and leave the parking area or meeting spot, please consider cancelling or postponing.

If temperatures fall below -18°C (or -26°C windchill), consider cancelling or postponing the activity as risk for frostbite or hypothermia increases at the temperatures.

Frostbite

Frostbite is damage to the skin caused by exposure to freezing temperatures. It is more common on small exposed areas of the body such as fingers, toes, and ears. Frostbite symptoms in the early stage (frostnip) include red or purple colouring of the skin and a sore feeling in the area. Second stage frostbite (superficial frostbite) shows up as a 'pins and needles' feeling in the skin and peeling skin. In the third stage (deep frostbite), most severe, frostbite shows up as numbness in the affected area and dark, almost black in colour skin. If you think frostbite is developing, cover skin and seek shelter to warm up, and seek medical assistance if frostbite is severe, especially if you suspect stage 2 or 3 frostbite.

Hypothermia

Hypothermia occurs when the body is exposed to cold or wet conditions, leading to a core body temperature drop below 95°F (as opposed to normal body temperature of about 98.6°F). The body is losing heat faster than it can produce it. Left untreated, it can be dangerous to health, leading to the failure of vital organs and body systems. While this more often occurs in winter during cold temperatures, hypothermia can also occur after exposure to cold water, or even after sweating, having damp clothes, and then experiencing a drop in air temperature at sunset. It needs to be considered in all seasons.

Preventing Hypothermia

- Dress warmly, in layers.
- Stay dry.
- Protect yourself from wind, rain, and snow. (This can be done most effectively by wearing clothes that block wind and moisture.)
- Eat high-energy snacks and drink plenty of water.
- Do not over-exert.

Symptoms of Hypothermia

- Shivering. An early sign of hypothermia, shivering starts mildly, but can become more severe and finally convulsive before ceasing.
- Slurred speech.
- Loss of coordination. This might begin as difficulty tying one's shoelaces or zipping one's jacket, and eventually include stumbling or falling.
- Confusion.
- Apathy (for example, the victim not taking care of his or her own needs).
- Irrational behavior.

Treatment of hypothermia

- If the victim is unconscious, seek medical help immediately.
- Gently move the victim to shelter.
- Remove wet clothes, and replace them with warm, dry garments.
- If the victim is alert enough to hold a cup, give warm, but not hot, liquids to drink. Sugary drinks can be helpful.
- If the victim is conscious and able, moderate exercise such as walking will help to generate heat.
- If the victim is unconscious or unable to exercise, place the victim in a sleeping bag to help speed rewarming, and insulate the sleeping bag with a plastic sheet (or a tarp) above and a pad below.

Other Significant Weather Events

Thunderstorms

Keep an eye on weather reports and be aware of risk of thunderstorms in advance of starting a hike or outdoor activity. Continue to monitor weather reports while out on the Trail and adjust plans if the risk increases.

If you find yourself caught in a thunderstorm, avoid open spaces, hills and high places or steep slopes. If you are in the forest, keep away from the edge of the forest, clearings or isolated trees. Do not lie down on the ground. Squat low to the ground with your feet together and keep your arms near your body. Tuck your head between your knees and avoid making contact with the ground with any other part of your body. This will reduce your risk of being struck by lightning. Boulders, rocky overhangs, and shallow caves offer no protection from lightning, which may actually flow through them along the ground after a strike. If possible, retreat to parked vehicles as soon as it is safe to do so.

Wind

Wind is a significant danger when working in the forest or in an area with trees. Wind can cause weakened parts of trees or “chicots” (dead standing trees) to fall from above resulting in serious injury or death. A tree may not become dangerous to volunteers until certain wind speeds are encountered. **If wind speeds exceed 40km an hour, all planned outdoor activities should be stopped or suspended, and cancelled and/or postponed until conditions moderate.**

Air Quality

While air quality concerns can occur at all times of the year, they often become more of a concern in hot, summer months and during wildfire season. Before engaging in outdoor activities, please check the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) [here](#), a scale that shows the risk that the current air quality has on health. Several factors can affect air quality, such as pollution, pollen, and wildfire activity, but the scale is generally based on the amount of fine particular matter in the air. The scale identifies risks at each level ranging from low risk (1-3), moderate risk (4-6), high risk (7-9) and very high (10+), noting the risks at each level for both the general population and also people at risk (children, people over 65 years old, those with pre-existing health conditions). **If the AQHI is 7 or higher, it is recommended that physical outdoor activities should be cancelled and/or postponed** until air quality improves. To understand more about the Air Quality Health Index, please refer [here](#).

TERRAIN, WILDLIFE, AND PLANTS

Terrain

Rivers, Streams and Other Water Bodies

Fording streams and rivers can be deceptively hazardous. Even a very shallow, swiftly flowing body of water can hold enough force to knock you off your feet. Have awareness of local flooding risks, and use caution and common sense. Use a walking stick for an extra point of contact to provide stability where possible. Exposure to cold water can also lead to a risk of hypothermia (for more information, please see page 8).

Caves, Cliffs and Crevices

Be aware of the location of rock formations in the area, and proceed with caution. Keep reasonable distance from cliff and crevice edges, and avoid distractions such as smartphones while near edges.

Wildlife

Coyotes



Credit: Ontario MNRF

Coyotes are a medium-sized member of the Canidae family. Coyotes have grayish coloured coats with black-tipped hairs along the back and tail and a whitish tinge to the belly and throat. They have ears that are relatively large as compared to the rest of the head and a black tipped bushy tail that points down when running. Coydogs are a cross between a Coyote and a domestic dog and have a more variable coat colouring ranging from grayish-brown to yellowish-gray to reddish-brown. These

animals keep the predatory nature of the Coyote and the domestic dog's lack of fear of humans.

Recently there has been a heightened awareness of Coyotes as there are increased sightings in urban areas. They are generally afraid of humans and will avoid them, but sometimes they become less timid from the chance at an easy meal through curbside garbage or in some cases people feeding them. Coyotes are most active during their mating season (January to March) and pupping season (April to June). This time of year is when breeding habits and a shortage of food can bring them closer to residential areas.

If approached by a coyote, stay calm and back away slowly. Do not turn your back or run. If the animal still seems aggressive stand tall, wave your arms and make lots of noise. Carry a flashlight to scare the animals away at night and if they pose an immediate threat, call 911. Always keep pets on a leash when hiking the Trail as they may get injured if they chase a coyote. More information on coyotes can be found [here](#).

Black Bears



Credit: Ontario MNRF

Black bears are common in southern Ontario, and are typically only found in northern areas of the Bruce Trail. Information on black bears can be found [here](#). Tips to avoid black bears include:

- Make noise as you move through wooded areas
- Carry and have readily accessible a whistle or an air horn, and bear pepper spray. Know how to use this spray.
- Avoid strong fragrances that may cause a bear to be curious; put any food you are carrying in sealed containers in your pack.
- If you encounter a bear and it is not paying any attention to you, slowly and quietly back away while watching the bear to make sure it isn't following you.
- If the bear knows you are there, raise your arms and make yourself look as big as possible. Speak in a firm but non-threatening voice while looking at the bear and backing away.
- If the bear continues to try to approach, stand your ground and be aggressive - use your whistle or air horn, yell, stand tall, wave your arms and throw objects.
- Do not climb a tree or run. Bears are faster and better at climbing trees than humans.

Rattlesnakes

Rattlesnakes have a brownish grey to dark grey background with dark saddle-shaped blotches on the back with several rows of alternating blotches on the side. They have a diamond shaped head with white stripes along jaw, and slitted pupils. They are a heavy bodied snake with narrower neck and a rattle at the end of their tail. More information on rattlesnakes can be found [here](#).

Tips for avoiding rattlesnakes:

- Wear footwear that covers the ankles and long pants.
- Be careful reaching or walking into brush or under rocks, under logs, in shady areas, or sunny areas where they may be basking.
- If you hear a rattlesnake, stay calm, stop walking, determine its location and slowly walk away – give it plenty of room to move away.
- If you encounter a rattlesnake on the road blocking your way, and it is safe to do so, you can pull over and try to encourage the snake off the road. You can do this by stomping

Credit: Ontario MNRF



from a safe distance; the vibrations will encourage the snakes to find another place to sunbathe. Remember your safety is the priority, and use your own judgement as to whether it is safe to stop.

- If you are bitten by a rattlesnake, remain calm, call 911, reduce activity and lay down to prevent circulation of venom. Remove any jewelry from around the bite and wash and cleanse the wound. Do not apply ice or a tourniquet.

Rattlesnakes are a species at risk and are protected in Ontario. Harming or killing these snakes is illegal.

Bees/Stinging Insects

Stinging insects have a sting (or stinger) at the posterior end of their abdomen. This group of insects includes honey bees, bumble bees, wasps, hornets, yellow jackets, and ants.

Tips for working around stinging insects:

- Anyone with sting allergies should carry bee sting kits containing epinephrine
- Wear light-coloured clothing, long sleeve shirts, long pants, and closed-toed boots or shoes. Avoid brightly coloured, patterned, or black clothing. Tie back long hair to avoid bees or wasps from getting entangled in your hair
- Do not wear perfumes, colognes, scented soaps, or powders as they contain fragrances that are attractive to insects.
- Be aware of potential for hives in brush or hollow logs, hanging in trees or in the ground
- Take a look around. Check to see if there are any visible signs of activity or a hive or nest. If you see a number of insects flying around, check to see if they are entering/exiting from the same hole or place. If so, it is likely a nest or a source of food.

- Power tools such as lawnmowers, weed eaters and chainsaws will aggravate the insects. When using these tools, be aware that the tools may provoke the insects or in some cases, cause the insects to swarm.
- Most bees and wasps will not sting unless they are startled or attacked. Do not swat at them or make fast movements. The best option is to let the insects fly away on their own. If you must, walk away slowly, or gently "blow" them away. The only exception is if you have disturbed a nest and hear "wild" buzzing. Protect your face with your hands and run from the area immediately.

Ticks and Lyme Disease

Lyme disease is spread by infected black legged/deer ticks. In most cases, infected ticks need to be attached for at least 24 hours to spread the infection. For more information on Lyme disease please click [here](#). To prevent tick bites:

- Use appropriate insect repellants on skin and clothing
- Wear light clothing so you can see them easier. Clothing should fit tightly at wrists, ankles, and waist. Tuck shirt tails into pants and pant legs into socks. This will help prevent them from crawling underneath your clothing.
- After being in the wilderness, promptly check your body for presence of ticks, especially hair, and moist, dark places like armpits, groin and under clothing.
- Bathe and/or change clothes after spending time out on the Trail.
- If you find a tick, remove embedded ticks properly or seek medical attention for removal. For information on tick removal please click [here](#).
- Seek treatment promptly if symptoms of tick-borne illness develop later, even if a tick bite was not known to occur. Early symptoms include fever, headache, muscle and joint pains, fatigue and a skin rash resembling a bullseye.

Plants

Poison Ivy

Poison ivy has 3 lobed or smooth-edged leaves that can be variable in shape. The middle leaflet has a much longer stalk than the two side ones. The plant can be a vine, shrub or herbaceous plant. It grows on sandy, stony, or rocky shores, thickets, clearings, forests, meadows and along the borders of woods and roadsides. The leaves can look very different throughout the year, and



Credit: Ontario MNRF

even on the same plant, as some have smooth edges, while others are lobed or toothed. Familiarize yourself with how the plant looks throughout the year. Poison ivy is a native plant that is an important food source for native animals such as rabbits and deer, and because of this, the BTC does not remove poison ivy unless it is causing a significant issue, such as covering a bootbrush.

If you come into contact with poison ivy:

- Remove any contaminated clothing with gloves and wash separately with hot water and detergent
- Wash skin with dish soap and water as soon as possible, ideally within 10-30 minutes of contact, to remove the oils
- If a rash develops (usually within 1-2 days of contact), treat with calamine lotion, and use cool compresses or baths to soothe irritation. Seek medical attention if blistering develops or the rash has spread to sensitive areas of the skin.

Stinging Nettle



Stinging Nettle is a herbaceous, and perennial plant that can be most often found in low wet areas. It grows to 0.9 to 2 metres (3 to 7 feet) tall in the summer and dying down to the ground in winter. The toothed green leaves are 3 to 20 centimetres (1 to 6 in) long and are borne oppositely on an erect, wiry, green stem. It bears small, greenish or brownish, numerous flowers in dense axillary inflorescences. The leaves and

stems are very hairy with many stinging hairs, whose tips come off when touched, transforming the hair into a needle that can inject several chemicals causing a painful sting, giving the species its common names: stinging nettle, burn-nettle, burn-weed, or burn-hazel.

If you encounter stinging nettle:

- Avoid touching or rubbing the affected area for 10 minutes, as this can drive the irritants deeper into the skin and worsen the reaction
- After this time, wash the area thoroughly with soap and water. If soap and water are unavailable, gently wipe the area with a clean cloth until proper washing is possible.
- After cleaning, use strong adhesive tape to remove any remaining fibres from the skin; a wax hair-removal strip can be used if needed.

Giant Hogweed



Credit: Ontario MNRF

Giant Hogweed is an extremely large plant growing from 2.5 to 4 metres (8 to 14 feet) high with leaves up to 1 metre (3 feet) in breadth. It has a thick—5 to 10 centimetres (2 to 4 inches)—hollow stem that is mottled with dark purple. Its stem and the undersides of its leaves are covered in coarse hairs. Its large, umbrella-shaped flowers are white in colour and can be more than 30 centimetres (1 foot) in diameter. The seeds of Giant Hogweed are flat and oval. It can be found along roadsides, vacant lots, streams, and rivers. It is often classified as a freshwater weed and is typically found in floodplains. For more information please click [here](#).

It produces a noxious sap that sensitizes the skin to ultraviolet light. This is known as photosensitivity, which can result in severe and painful burning and blistering. It is important to avoid any skin contact with this plant. Since the sap increases the photosensitivity of the skin, it is important to avoid exposure to the sun for at least 48

hours after contact; the sun's radiation can cause skin that has been exposed to the sap to burn and blister. Wash the affected skin. If blisters form, contact a medical professional for advice and treatment. *If you encounter Giant Hogweed on the Trail please report it to your Trail Director or BTC Staff. Do not attempt to remove yourself.*

Wild Parsnip



Wild Parsnip has a single light green (sometimes purple tinged) deeply grooved, hollow stem and stands between 5 and 150 cm tall. The leaves are alternate on the stem, pinnately compound, approximately 15cm in length, with saw toothed edges. The flowers are small, yellow, 5-petalled and grow in umbrellalike clusters and bloom June to October. It occurs throughout Ontario in abandoned yards, waste places, meadows, old fields, roadsides

and railway embankments. It has similar but less severe health risks as Giant Hogweed. For more information please click [here](#). *If you encounter Wild Parsnip on the Trail please report it to your Trail Director or BTC Staff. Do not attempt to remove yourself.*

Chicots or “Dead Standing Trees”

A chicot (pronounced “shee-ko”) is a tree that has either become dry or rotten. There are various reasons for this: either from normal aging or special conditions such as species extinction, climate, insect infestation, disease or human activity. Chicots present a tremendous hazard in the woods and need to be treated with care. Bruce Trail volunteers need to evaluate the presence and condition of chicots on the property or area of their worksite. To identify these trees, be on the lookout for:

- An absence of leaves (consider the season)
- Missing twigs and small branches
- Trunks or main branches that have:
 - Presence of shelf-life fungus growth
 - Detached bark
 - Easily visible cracks along the trunk
 - Canker growth on the trunk
 - Insect infestation
- Signs roots may have rotted out, such as:
 - Mushrooms growing at the base of the tree
 - Black filaments under the bark
 - Spongy material at the base of the tree
- Changing weather conditions, such as:
 - Excessive wind
 - Snow or ice-loading on trees
 - Soil rapidly freezing and thawing (spring and fall)

Any dead tree should be considered dangerous and if it cannot be felled by a certified chain sawyer then no work should be performed within its falling distance.

Standing dead trees that are a safe distance from the Trail, and do not pose a threat to work areas should be left standing, as these trees can perform an ecosystem role of providing shelter to animals.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES FOR VOLUNTEER GROUP OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

As volunteers participating in or leading groups in outdoor activities on the Bruce Trail, it is important to plan ahead to ensure a successful event or activity. All volunteers are encouraged to review the Health and Safety Manual ahead of planned activities and to use their best judgment to remain safe in the outdoors.

Please refer to the section titled [Personal Safety and Equipment](#) to ensure you are heading out with the necessary materials to remain safe, and always stay vigilant and aware of your location.

Weather can be unpredictable and can sometimes create unsafe conditions for outdoor physical activity.

Please consider cancelling and/or postponing planned activities in the following scenarios:

- Outdoor temperatures exceed reasonable safe conditions for activities.
 - If temperatures are greater than 35°C and/or humidex greater than 40°C
 - If temperatures fall below -18°C and/or below -26°C with windchill
- If excessive snowfall or rain warnings are in effect, and may also make travel to the activity location unsafe for volunteers or participants.
- If severe storm warnings are in effect for the area.
- If the Air Quality Health Index is 7 or higher.
- If wind speeds exceed 40km/h.

Want to review the content of this manual further? Click here for the [knowledge check quiz](#).