



The Dr. Paul Syme Section of the Voyageur Trail

On November 23, 1974 nine people did the very first construction on the Voyageur Hiking Trail between where Camp Korah presently sits and Maki Road.

Until then, the Voyageur Trail had been in the planning stages beginning on March 23, 1973 when the then Commissioner of Parks and Recreation for the City of Sault Ste. Marie, Harold Brain, convened a meeting of “persons interested in establishing a hiking trail along the precipice of the Cambrian Shield” from Gros Cap on Lake Superior to Hiawatha Park, just north of Sault Ste. Marie.

One of those in attendance, Dr. Paul D. Syme, a Sault Ste. Marie research scientist and member of the Bruce Trail Association, immediately saw the possibility of extending this concept eastward to Espanola, then south across Manitoulin Island to link up with southern Ontario’s Bruce Trail.

Dr. Paul Syme was the acknowledged leader of the group who on October 24, 1973 chose the name “Voyageur Trail Association” for their newly established group. He was the first President elected of the VTA. He met with officials of the Bruce Trail Association asking for advice and receiving trail building training and brought that advice and training back to the Sault visionaries.

It took the group until the late summer of 1975 to finish building the 55-kilometre Saulteaux Section from Gros Cap to Hiawatha Park. The Saulteaux Section was officially opened on September 21, 1975 at a ceremony at Gros Cap before a crowd of 150 persons.

Dr. Syme remarked of the satisfaction that comes from being part of an idea that is greater than one’s self. The Voyageur Trail is just such an idea. Members past and present have developed and maintained some 600 kilometres of hiking trail through some of the most rugged, yet scenic topography in eastern Canada--a remarkable accomplishment for an organization the membership of which has probably never exceeded 250.

One man’s idea and leadership inspired it all. A testament to the power each of us has within our grasp.

The Dr. Paul Syme Voyageur Trail Section was dedicated in 2007.

To learn more about the Voyageur Trail Association, visit: www.voyageurtrail.ca