



NO. 107 WINTER 2010

Published by the

VOYAGEUR TRAIL

ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 20040

150 Churchill Blvd.

Sault Ste. Marie, ON

P6A 6W3

Visit our web site at:

www.voyageurtrail.ca

Email address:

info@voyageurtrail.ca

The Voyageur Trail Association is a non-profit, volunteer group dedicated to building and maintaining a public hiking trail along the northern shores of Lakes Superior and Huron, from Thunder Bay to Sudbury.

The VTA is a member of Hike Canada En Marche, Hike Ontario, Ontario Trails Council, and Trans Canada Trail.

If you would prefer us to email you a short message when the colour VTA newsletter is available on our web-site, just send an email to: info@voyageurtrail.ca

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VOYAGEUR TRAIL NEWS



EDITOR: Cheryl Landmark

LAYOUT BY: Dawn Elmore

VTA Annual Meeting *by Susan Graham*

October 2 was the date for this year's VTA Annual Meeting, held at the Prince Township Community Centre. Here are highlights of what was covered at the Coordinating Council meeting in the morning and the (brief!) General meeting in the afternoon:

Dan Andrews from the Trans Canada Trail discussed efforts underway to complete the TCT, with special focus on Northern Ontario. It would appear there is strong support for canoe routes rather than hiking trail across North-Western Ontario. A feasibility study is being done, and the VTA will be examining the recommendations when it is complete.

A committee is being formed to upgrade the website. Our current site looks dated, and is due for a facelift. Part of the desire to have a new look is to attract more young members, who are most likely to use the internet to find information about the VTA. An events calendar has recently been added to the current website on an experimental basis. Steve Dominy would like to see the events calendar become an interactive feature that would allow for additions and changes by the hike leaders; flexibility that we do not have at the moment because events must be planned in advance of the newsletter being printed. Steve is looking for feedback on the existing calendar. Check it out if you have not already done so.



Gayle Phillips presents Dawn Elmore with Steve Taylor Award, VTA Annual Meeting 2010

We were pleased to welcome Kelsey Johansen from Marathon to the meeting. Kelsey hails from Southern Ontario, but fell in love with Northern Ontario when she attended Lakehead University. Now employed by the town of Marathon, Kelsey is responsible for the development of trails and promotion of hiking. She had some wonderful news regarding a new waterfront trail going south from Marathon that is currently underway, and will provide opportunity for loop trails with the existing (rugged) Voyageur Trail. She will investigate an apparent existing trail that cyclists are using going north from Marathon to Terrace Bay that we were not aware of! We wish Kelsey well in her endeavours, and hope to see an active VT club in Marathon soon.

The current Coordinating Council changed very little from last year, with nearly everyone acclaimed to their

position. Two notable exceptions were: (sadly) Carole Blaquiere has stepped down as Recording Secretary, but will retain her position as Hike Ontario Representative (and doing a fine job there!). Kelsey Johansen volunteered as Publicity Director, a position that has been vacant for some time. The Recording Secretary's position is an important one that we need to fill, so if you think you fit the bill, or know someone who does, we'd be happy to hear from you.

The Steve Taylor Award this year went to Dawn Elmore, a Saulteaux Club member who does our newsletter layout. Dawn was nominated for her work in arranging a Hike Ontario Leadership Course in Sault Ste. Marie in May. Twenty-four people took the course, with Mike Landmark from the Soo and Gerry Jean from Elliot Lake qualifying as trainers to teach the course in the future. Dawn has been volunteering to lead

VTA Annual Meeting

cont'd from page 1

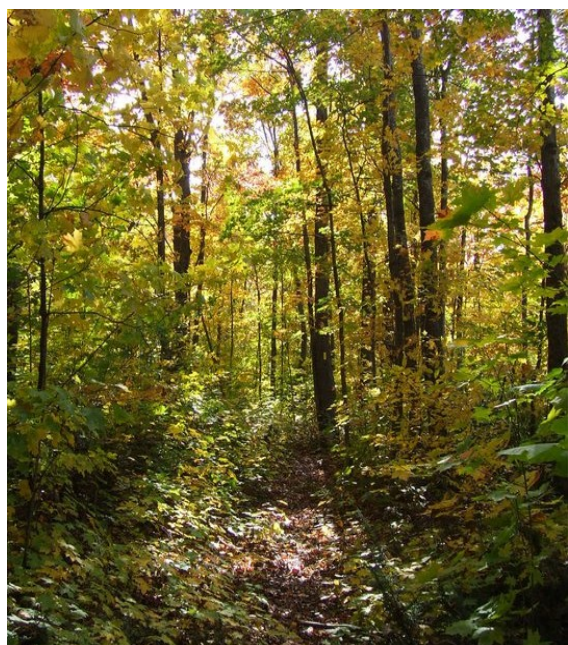
outings, with a particular slant on family events, as she is the mother of a young boy. As well as having her name added to our plaque, Dawn received an engraved wooden pen set. Congratulations Dawn and thank-you from all of us.

A draw for free memberships was made from all the names of Hike Leaders, Sweeps and Work Party members from the past year. Winners were Cheryl Landmark, Gerald or Nicole Jean and Jean-Guy Le-tarte. Congratulations to everyone!

The meeting wrapped up and everyone headed to the Gros Cap Loop Trail so we could enjoy the glorious fall weather! Thanks to all who attended.



Thanks to Kelsey Johansen for these amazing photos of the Gros Cap Loop Hike following the 2010 VTA Annual Meeting! As can be seen from the photos, it was a beautiful fall day filled with spectacular views and great company!!



Guidebook Coordinator-in-Training Opportunity

Looking for something you can do to have a real impact on your hiking association? Something that can be done in your spare time, requires only a few hours per month, and will bring you together with other like-minded volunteers? Consider helping out with the next edition of the Voyageur Hiking Trail Guidebook. Amongst other VTA roles, Steve Dominy has led the production of the guide for the past 15+ years, and is now looking to ease his volunteer workload. *Here's your chance to make a significant contribution to the VTA.*

The Voyageur Hiking Trail Guidebook, now in its 4th edition, serves as a wonderful introduction to the 600+ km of trails in our system. Currently, the book is sold in retail outlets across Ontario, and to the world via the on-line store. The next version will be an update of Edition 4.0 as changes are relatively minor, and publication is targeted for fall 2011.

Edition 4.0 was the first to include GIS maps produced using GPS data for the entire trail. The project involved rewriting and painstakingly editing all maps and trail descriptions. That effort saw the formation of a committee that took on specific components of the guidebook project, such as map production, GPS data collection, preparing written descriptions, soliciting advertising, and editing. Many of these committee members are continuing to collect GPS tracks, create new maps, and make edits and improvements as trail additions and reroutes are made.

The main role of the coordinator is to ensure that the end product is of high quality and accurate. This requires organizing the various tasks, which include providing direction and assistance to committee members, overseeing the editing of text and maps, and coordinating printing.

Steve has agreed to work closely with the new coordinator over the next year or so to ensure a smooth transition. Access to a computer having word processing software and (ideally) high-speed internet is required. If interested in this opportunity, please contact Steve at: 705-946-2484 or email sdominy1203@gmail.com. If you can't commit to being coordinator but are willing to serve on the committee, that's OK too. Any amount of help with this ongoing project will be welcomed.

Enthusiasm for the Web??

Do you enjoy being on the Internet? Facebook? Twitter? If you do, the Voyageur Trail Association could use your help!

We are beginning the process of doing a complete overhaul of our web site at www.voyageurtrail.ca and we need someone with some enthusiasm to take over the reins of managing the site once it has been re-vamped.

Thanks to high speed internet being available in a lot of locations throughout the province, this job wouldn't necessarily have to be done by someone located inside the confines of Sault Ste. Marie! You could live anywhere!

The VTA will hire someone to do a complete site re-design but it would be really great if we could find someone to take over the reins of the new site before it's being re-designed. That way, you and the site re-designer could put your heads together to build exactly what YOU would like to see in the VTA site right from the ground up! If you could add in a Facebook page or possibly even a Twitter account to attract younger members--so much the better!

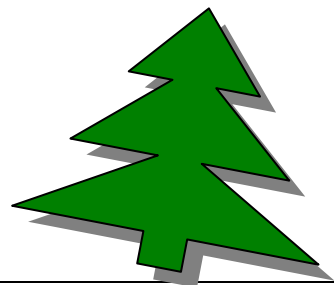
Anyone who might be interested in looking into this volunteer role, can contact the VTA for more details at: info@voyageurtrail.ca

Welcome New Members!!

Clarence Abbott
Michael Belsito
Joel Caron
Gabriel Caron
Stacey Collins
Donna Condon
Daryll Deming
Shelia Deming
Sarah Faubert
Andrea Faubert
Tana Foucault
Beth Harten
Dianne Hollinger
Kelsey Johansen

Hilary Lauzon
George Lauzon
Connie Nykyforak
James Pye
Judy Pye
Ghislain Quenneville
Azadeh Quenneville
Brooke Reynolds
Michael Ripley
Lynda See
Leah Spencer-Klewchuk
Caege Sten
Paula Takats
Ron Tynnela

HAPPY
HOLIDAYS!!



Journey to the Third Highest Peak in Ontario *by Dawn Elmore*

On August 22, 2010, sixteen adventurous VTA members climbed the third highest peak in Ontario, Griffin Lake Peak. The adventure started with a 22 km ride on questionable bush roads from Chippewa Falls to the unmarked parking area. The hikers then proceeded to follow an unmarked ATV trail to the turnoff to Griffin Lake Peak, where they were greeted with a slow and gradual climb up to the 2,100 ft peak. While the day started with questionable weather, the hikers were greeted with blue skies and gorgeous views once they reached the top. From the top, one can see 360 degrees ranging from Lake Superior all the way to Searchmont and beyond.

A special thank you to Steve Dominy for climbing the fire tower to set up the camera and take these wonderful photos of the group. I look forward to leading more hikes in this stunning part of the Algoma highlands!!





Remote Trails—Challenges and Solutions

by Kelsey Johansen and Steve Dominy

We're the first to admit that venturing into the wilderness on a 15-25 km hike is not everyone's idea of a good time, particularly if you need to arrange transportation at the other end. And yes, the VT is classed as a wilderness trail, meaning that many parts are challenging to access owing to roads that are in poor condition or perhaps non-existent. Long distances between access points limit the appeal of some trails to a relatively small number of users. Maintaining or renewing these trails is very difficult for volunteers, sometimes requiring overnight stays to thoroughly spruce up more remote sections. The result is that the less accessible segments of the trail tend to get overlooked by the average hiker. In this article, we will discuss some of the challenges of, and propose some solutions to, maintaining remote trails in the context of two remote areas of the Voyageur Trail system. We will also propose creative ways to make remote trails more attractive to the average hiker.

The Echo Ridges Section meets the criteria for a remote trail because it has few access points. Stretching 56 km from Mabel Lake to Tower Lake, hikers can enjoy the northern hardwood forest along with numerous lakes and rivers. These include Maud Lake, Garden River (including the magnificent High Dump), Wahbunose Lake, Echo Lake and the Upper Echo River, Coffee Creek, One and Two Horse Lakes, Wilson Lake and Peter Lake. While many trail users have hiked in the Mabel and Tower Lake areas, and a smaller number in the Echo Lake/Echo River area near the main access points, few have visited other points of interest in this section.

The need to obtain a parking permit from the band office before entering the Garden River Reserve deters many users from accessing the trail at [A2] or [A3]. The Two Horse Lake Road has deteriorated (washouts, exposed boulders, etc.) over the 30+ years since this section was completed, making access challenging between access points [A6] and [A10]. Even reaching [A4] and [A5] requires good driving skills, particularly in a compact car with low ground clearance.

Many areas of the Marathon Section of the trail can also be classed as remote, particularly the Hawk's Ridge Segment of the trail that leads south from Marathon towards Pukaskwa National Park and the Coastal Hiking Trail. The Hawk's Ridge Trail has only two access points in Marathon, one requiring an 8 km hike from the Penn Lake Park [A2] that, while equipped with ample parking and a comfort station, is home to poorly maintained trails (extensive deadfall, washouts, and collapsed bridges), while the other, which provides direct access to the trail, is a small cul-de-sac with limited parking [A3]. Providing breathtaking views of Lake Superior, this 31.6 kilometer rugged trail section leads through boreal forest. The trail boasts challenging elevation changes as it makes its way towards the village of Heron Bay where poor signage and the need to

obtain access through a gated road deters many users from accessing the trail at [A4]. Travel further along this trail crosses the Pic River, requiring hikers to detour through the Pic River First Nations Community, allowing access to [A5] the final entry point before the trail joins the Coastal Hiking Trail and its associated network of trails in Pukaskwa National Park. This portion of the trail, from [A3] to [A5] and beyond, is extremely rugged, with few bridges and no stairs, requiring trail users to scramble up steep hills and across boulders. Challenges like these, and the fact that most of this trail is established on Crown Land overseen by the Ministry of Natural Resources and therefore not under control by the local Municipalities, also impede trail renewal projects.

These are examples of two sections of the trail associated with long distances to cover prior to trail maintenance and renewal, and are compounded by the fact there are relatively few users to report problems and to help keep the trail established. These challenges must be considered in developing strategies for improving the quality of these trails and increasing their associated usage. Here are some options available to local clubs to help them address the challenges that come with remote trails.

Solutions to these challenges include **creating loop trails** to draw more users to the more easily-accessed portions of the established trails. Some of these loop trail users may later decide to venture further along the trail once they become comfortable with parking options and begin to develop ideas for covering longer distances.

Local clubs can also negotiate land use agreements with local landowners, including residents, businesses, Municipalities and the Ministry of Natural Resources - check the VTA website for land use agreement forms. These land use agreements allow volunteers to establish new trails, including **loop trails**. Volunteers and volunteer organizations are able to erect trails and trail features, like bridges and stairways, without triggering the same legal obligations that municipalities do. Talk to your municipal representatives to see if they can help your local club in other ways, like with in-kind or financial support.

Organizing **end-to-end outings** is another means to get hikers on these trails. They can consist of covering an entire section over several outings, or in a single trip. Spotting cars (parked at each end so that hikers don't have to do the whole trail twice) are usually required. Having spot cars arranged ahead of time can be avoided if you have drivers willing to **swap car keys** - here two separate but similar-sized groups start at opposite ends of the trail segment with the drivers exchanging keys at the midpoint and the groups meeting at a convenient location (perhaps a local restaurant or coffee shop) when they have completed the hike. Having a **badge or certificate** for those who complete the whole trail can serve as an added incentive.

If the trail is along a large body of water such as Lake Superior, consider a **canoe or kayak / hike outing**. For trails that cross or follow old roads accessible by bicycle, a **bike / hike outing** could be a solution. (*con't on page 9*)

Saulteaux Club Outing Schedule (Sault Ste. Marie)

Typical meeting locations: Goodlife building, 589 Second Line East (Second Line side); Market Mall, 275 Second Line West (on Korah Road corner); Churchill Plaza, 150 Churchill Blvd (on Trunk Road between Lake & Wellington Streets) near Beer Store; Wellington Square Mall, 625 Trunk Road, near the now closed restaurant.

To see the outing schedules for other clubs, check the VTA website or call the local contact in the community of interest.

Saulteaux Club

(Sault Ste. Marie and area—outings marked with an asterisk (*) are outside Sault Ste. Marie). For all outings, bring water, a lunch, dress appropriately, and be prepared to sign an assumption of risk agreement.

Sat., Jan. 8 ~ Crimson Ridge snowshoe with Doris (705-942-9466). Meet 10AM in Market Mall parking lot to car pool. Behaved pets welcome.

***Sun., Jan. 9** ~ Ski the shoulder of the Goulais River valley (Hwy 17 to Hwy 552). Meet @ 10:30AM. Call Mark at 254-2356 to confirm.

***Sat. & Sun., Jan. 15 & 16** ~ Stokely Creek Lodge is hosting its 2nd annual Snowshoe event. Go visit the trails from 10am to 4pm on either day or meet as a group on Sunday at 10am in the Stokely parking lot. The cost is \$15 if you are not a Stokely member and includes lunch and a bunch of prizes! Contact Carole at 705-649-2235.

Mon., Jan. 17 ~ Saulteaux bi-monthly meeting at Civic Centre 7PM. Call Gayle at 705-942-1891 for more info.

Sat., Jan. 22 ~ Mable Lake snowshoe with Garry (705-949-1302). Meet 10AM at Wellington Square Mall (near Trunk & Boundary).

Sat., Jan. 29 ~ Snowshoe Connor Road to Trout Lake. Call Mark at 254-2356 to confirm.

Sat. & Sun., Feb. 5 & 6 ~ (Bon Soo) Volunteers needed

to strap snowshoes on children's feet. Call Susan at 705-949-4105.

Sat. & Sun., Feb. 12 & 13 ~ (Bon Soo) Volunteers needed to strap snowshoes on children's feet. Call Susan at 705-949-4105.

***Sun., Feb. 20** ~ Tier Lake snowshoe with Dawn (705-649-4936). Call leader for meeting time and place.

Mon., Feb. 21 ~ (Family Day) Afternoon romp in the snow--great for families with small children! Meet at 1PM. Call Gayle at 705-942-1891 for location.

***Sat., Feb. 26** ~ Snowshoe/ski at LSPP Pictographs with Garry (705-949-1302). Meet 9AM at Goodlife as we have a long drive ahead.

Mon, Feb. 28 ~ Have you got your annual dinner ticket? Call 705-949-4105 today - last chance!

Sat., Mar. 5 ~ Saulteaux Club Annual Dinner at Sandro's Restaurant with presentation on Dieter & Erika's trip to Greece. Call Susan for tickets at 705-949-4105.

Sun., Mar. 6 ~ Snowshoe at Red Rock with Dieter and Erika (942-9636). Meet 10AM at Market Mall. Behaved pets welcome.

***Sat., & Sun., Mar. 12 & 13** ~ Get your gang together for a Snowshoe Camp weekend! We must sign up a minimum of 10 'campers' to get the special rate of \$35/person per night. We will spend Friday and Saturday nights at Snowshoe Camp (near

Thessalon) with snowshoeing, skiing and ice fishing during the daylight hours and potlucks at dinner time. Two and 3 bedroom cabins available. Visit: www.snowshoecamp.com or call Sylvie Reid at 705-946-1173 for more information.

***Sat., Mar. 19** ~ Ski Heyden, Finn, Pants, U. Island Lakes loop. Call Mark @ 254-2356 to confirm.

***Sun., Mar. 20** ~ Introduction to kids snowshoeing and a scavenger hunt at Glenview Cottages. 1:00 p.m. Call Dawn at 705-649-4936 to register.

Mon., Mar. 21 ~ Saulteaux Club bi-monthly meeting at 7PM in the Civic Centre. After business meeting, we will plan our summer outing schedule. Call Gayle at 705-942-1891.

Sat., Mar. 26 ~ Snowshoe the Odena Loop with Doris (705-942-9466). Meet at 10AM at Goodlife to car pool. Behaved pets welcome.

Sat., Apr. 9 ~ Introduction to Hiking in Algoma - This presentation will cover hiking benefits, basic hiking safety, equipment, trails in the area and the VTA. A short hike along the Hub Trail will follow. Location to be announced. Call Carole for details at 705-649-2235.

***Sat., Apr. 16** ~ Snowshoe at Pancake Bay with Doris (705-942-9466). Meet at 10AM at Goodlife to car pool. Behaved pets welcome.

***Sat., Apr. 23** ~ Spring hike to Batchewana Falls with Dawn (705-649-4936). Meet 10AM at



NEW!!

Check the VTA events calendar on the website for up-to-date information on outings. This may include new outings added since the newsletter was printed OR last minute changes to scheduled outings.

To check the calendar, click on www.voyageurtrail.ca

Timberland Store in Goulais River.

Sun., May 1 ~ Our annual "Go To Blazes" work party. Tools will be provided. Behaved pets welcome. Call Gayle at 705-942-1891 for more details.

***Sat., May 7** ~ Hike Robertson Cliffs. Call Mark @ 254-2356 to confirm.

Saulteaux Club Outing Schedule

Cont'd

Sat., May 14 ~ Introduction to geocaching with Steve (705-946-2484) and Bob (705-946-3126). Call for more info.

Mon., May 16 - Saulteaux Club bi-monthly meeting at 7PM in the Civic Centre. Call Gayle at 705-942-1891.

Coueurs de Bois Club Outing Schedule (Elliot Lake)

For fun, fitness and friendship come and join us. Unless otherwise posted, we meet at 10:00 am in the Sears parking lot. We enjoy regular Tuesday (easy), Thursday (intermediate) and Saturday (easy) hikes. For the latest schedule and photos of past outings check our website at www.coueursdeboiselliotlake.blogspot.com and/or the Elliot Lake Standard Community Board.

PLEASE CONTACT HIKE LEADERS FOR MORE INFORMATION.

For outings bring water, lunch and proper footwear. Please dress appropriately for weather conditions. Be prepared to sign an "Assumption of Risk Agreement". Make sure your fitness level corresponds to the outing level in which you participate.

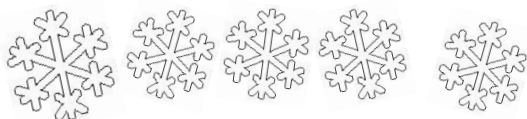
Hike Levels:

Easy: 2-3 hours Level 1 Ontario

Intermediate: 3-4 hours Level 2 Ontario

January 2011

Tuesday 4th Easy hike Jean-Guy 848-2544
Thursday 6th Intermediate hike John B 578-2122
Saturday 8th Easy hike Steve 461-3872
Tuesday 11th Easy hike Shelley 848-0831
Thursday 13th Intermediate hike Fred 848-2956
Saturday 15th Easy hike Steve 461-3872
Tuesday 18th Easy hike Grant 848-7055
Thursday 20th Intermediate hike Emily 848-5980
Saturday 22nd Easy hike Jean-Guy 848-2544
Tuesday 25th Easy hike Gerry & Nickie 461-6304
Thursday 27th Intermediate hike Larry 261-0887
Saturday 29th Easy hike Grant 848-7055



Coueurs de Bois Club Outing Schedule

cont'd

February 2011

Tuesday 1st Easy hike Steve 461-3872
Thursday 3rd Intermediate hike John B. 578-2122
Saturday 5th Easy hike Jean-Guy 848-2544
Tuesday 8th Easy hike Scott 848-5188
Thursday 10th Intermediate hike Grant 848-7055
Saturday 12th Easy hike Larry 261-0887
Tuesday 15th Easy hike Shelley 848-0831
Tuesday 15th General Meeting at the Snowbird Club 7:00 pm
Thursday 17th Intermediate hike Fred 848-2956
Saturday 19th Hike to Nancy-Jo's cottage 848-2947
Tuesday 22nd Easy hike Grant 848-7055
Thursday 24th Intermediate hike Emily 848-5980
Saturday 26th Easy hike Steve 461-3872
Sunday 27th Winterfest snowshoe activity Lionel and Carol 848-0461
11:00 am and 2:00 pm

March 2011

Tuesday 1st Easy hike Gerry & Nickie 461-6304
Thursday 3rd Intermediate hike John B 578-2122
Saturday 5th Easy hike Steve 461-3872
Tuesday 8th Easy hike Scott 848-5188
Thursday 10th Intermediate hike Fred 848-2956
Saturday 12th Easy hike Grant 848-7055
Tuesday 15th Easy hike Nancy-Jo 848-2947
Thursday 17th Intermediate hike Grant 848-7055
Saturday 19th Easy hike Emily 848-5980
Tuesday 22nd Easy hike Shelley 848-0831
Thursday 24th Intermediate hike Emily 848-5980
Saturday 26th Easy hike Steve 461-3872
Tuesday 29th Easy hike Nancy-Jo 848-2947
Thursday 31st Intermediate hike Larry 261-0887

April 2011

Saturday 2nd Easy hike Grant 848-7055
Tuesday 5th Easy hike Steve 461-3872
Thursday 7th Intermediate hike John B. 578-2122
Saturday 9th Easy hike Larry 261-0887
Tuesday 12th Easy hike Shelley 848-0831
Thursday 14th Intermediate hike Emily 848-5980
Saturday 16th Easy hike Scott 848-5188
Tuesday 19th Easy hike Jean-Guy 848-2544
Tuesday 19th General Meeting at the Snowbird Club 7:00 pm
Thursday 21st Intermediate hike Fred 848-2956
Saturday 23rd Easy hike Steve 461-3872
Tuesday 26th Easy hike Nancy-Jo 848-2947
Thursday 28th Intermediate hike Gerry & Nickie 461-6304
Saturday 30th Easy hike Jean-Guy 848-2544



These Boots were Made for Walking...Health Benefits of Hiking - Part One

The benefits accruing to regular users of the Voyageur Trail, and walkers in general, such as improved cardiovascular function, maintaining a healthy weight, and reduced stress have long been recognized. In fact, fitness researchers continue to tout walking as one of the easiest and least expensive ways of improving overall health. Now, several recent studies are pointing to a number of previously unknown health benefits. If you were procrastinating about taking part in that next outing, perhaps you'll be motivated to get moving after you read this. This is not an exhaustive list of benefits...future newsletters will include other examples as part of a short series of "health tidbits"!



Hiking helps prevent cancer As if you needed another reason to get out on the Voyageur Trail, along come the results of the following study. Phytoncides, which are given off by various spices, onion, garlic, oak and pine trees (and bark) and many other plants, are known to increase production of anti-cancer cells and ward off other germs and viruses in the air. These compounds are released by plants to ward off rot, insects and animals. As phytoncides (also used in aromatherapy's essential oils) become airborne, they end up in the bloodstream of hikers who breathe them in. In Taiwan, South Korea and Japan, people commonly engage in so-called 'forest bathing' to breathe in phytoncides emitted by plant and trees, in order to improve their health. So, what are you waiting for? Get out on the trail!

'Green exercise' improves mood

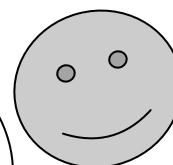
A simple, free way to boost mental health is to exercise outdoors, whether walking, gardening or cycling, concludes a recent study on 'green exercise'. "Every green environment improved both self-esteem and mood," even urban parks, says the study from the United Kingdom's University of Essex. Places with water gave an extra lift. As little as five minutes of 'green exercise' – activity in the presence of nature – benefited all types of people, according to the researchers, who analyzed data on 1,252 people from 10 prior British studies. Of the people in the study, 92% felt less depressed, 86% were less tense, 81% less angry, 80% less fatigued, 79% less confused and 56% felt more vigorous. So, that means even a short walk (say on the HUB Trail in the Sault or to the store in Elliot Lake) will make you feel better. If you have to drive to work or to shop, why not park nearby and walk the last 5 or 10 minutes!

Thank You, Landowners!

The VTA would like to once again extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to all of our landowner partners for their continued generosity and goodwill in allowing us access to their lands for our trail system. Without you, we would not have the opportunity to experience hiking, biking, snowshoeing and skiing in some of the most magnificent landscapes in Northern Ontario. Wishing you and your families all the best for this holiday season and a happy New Year!

Walking can add minutes to your life.

This enables you at 85 years old to spend an additional 5 months in a nursing home at \$7000 per month!!



Remember...the VTA has an on-line store at www.voyageurtrail.ca...consider a VTA guidebook or membership as a gift for friend or family...what better way to encourage people to get out and enjoy the trails!!

experience The East Coast Trail with Brown Rabbit Walkabout

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

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

For prices and information contact Isa.



Phone: 1-709-334-2208

Fax: 1-709-334-3601

email: brownrabbitcabins@nf.aibn.com

www.brownrabbit.nl.ca

Check out the new VTA Events Calendar

Interested in finding out about upcoming Voyageur Trail outings (hikes, work parties, etc.) and other activities (meetings, etc.) but can't find your newsletter schedule? Details are now posted on a test version of an events calendar, linked through www.voyageurtrail.ca. Thanks to the talents and efforts of Ian Graham, son of long-time VTA members Cliff and Susan Graham, this calendar was launched in the fall of 2010. It currently features unique colour coding for each section's activities (currently only Saulteaux and Coureurs de Bois have postings), a Google map of the meeting/car pooling location, and the event details. The calendar is also a great way to announce a new event that did not meet the newsletter deadline, or to update a published one.

A number of features are envisioned for the final, fully operational version of the calendar. These include an interactive feature whereby participants will be able to register for an outing through the website, outing leaders could update the notice with any planned changes, and registered participants would be automatically notified if the outing details change. Meanwhile, changes and additions can only be made by the administrator (Steve Dominy).

Members are invited to try out the calendar and report any problems or offer suggestions for improving it. You will find a link to the calendar near the top of the home page, and via a miniature calendar near the bottom of that page. Please contact Steve Dominy at sdominy1203@gmail.com with your feedback and suggestions. **In particular, we're looking for ideas that will bring trail users from across the trail system to visit this calendar on a regular basis – please let us know how you think we can best do this.**

Website Committee Being Struck

Today, most website visitors must be captivated within a few seconds to hold onto them. They want their information fast or they will go elsewhere to find it. Many people now want to interact with other like-minded members. Furthermore, a website must be updated with new content regularly to keep visitors returning, and information must be easy to find, relevant, and current.

The Voyageur Trail Association (VTA) website receives only a fraction of the potential hits we would see if we had a more dynamic and attractive website. Often the first point of contact for today's potential trail users, the VTA website has become a critical part of our publicity efforts. Thus, when visitors report difficulty in locating the information they want, we must pay attention. The website was designed in 1997 and has remained essentially static since then except for a software change. In today's fast-paced computer age, 13 years is like an eternity! (*con't*)

Modernizing the website has become a necessity to attract and retain visitors long enough to get our main messages across and offer them something of value. In particular we must engage more young people in hiking, and we recognize that they are increasingly "plugged-in" to dynamic and interactive social media.

In early 2010 a plan was endorsed by the Coordinating Council to improve the current website. A committee is being formed to guide the project, and we're still looking for people who can devote time to this over the next year or so. In addition, **a new webmaster is being sought** at the early stage of the project (see details in separate item). Anyone interested in helping to revamp the website is invited to contact Steve Dominy (sdominy1203@gmail.com) or Gayle Phillips (gayle.p@shaw.ca) for more information.

The Beauty of Northern Ontario

by Dawn Elmore

This month, I am finishing the layout for the winter newsletter in sunny southern Texas. Being here makes me realize how lucky we all are to: 1) live in Northern Ontario, and 2) to have access to a large and sparsely populated wilderness area that we can explore at our leisure. My travels in Texas have certainly been fun and I have enjoyed getting to know the region. However, I have come to appreciate much that we take for granted in the north that is a privilege and a rarity in much of the rest of the world. Here are the top three examples of what I have come to be even more thankful for this holiday season:

1. The Algoma region is *safe*. We are able to explore hiking trails and crown land without fear of armed guards, electric fences, and gun-toting border patrol guards (as long as we wear bright colours during hunting season!).
2. We have lots and lots of *clean, fresh water*. We have access to an amazing freshwater lake and can drink from many of our inland lakes. We can hike to waterfalls, rivers, streams, and creeks—the only difficulty is choosing which body of water to hike to!!
3. We have an *amazingly diverse landscape*. We can choose to hike on mountains, in valleys, along the shores of lakes or rivers, or through the highlands. The scenery is never boring and there is always somewhere new to explore!

Do You Have Talents to Offer?

The Saulteaux Voyageur Trail Club is recruiting for a volunteer Vice-President! (Larry is looking to retire!) We would love to find someone who has some skills in working on our blog and on a Facebook page that we have just created (yes, we have a Facebook page!). It would be really neat to find someone who could help drag us into the new social media, (or at least be willing to learn and teach us older folks!) If you have any time or talents you can offer—we would LOVE to hear from you. If the Vice-Presidency doesn't appeal to you, perhaps we can find you a more suitable spot—but either way, it starts with a phone call. Anyone interested in discussing more, please call Gayle at 705-942-1891 or Susan at 705-949-4105.



Feeling creative?? Been on the Voyageur Trail lately and have a story you want to get down on paper??... The next newsletter deadline is April 1st!! Send your submissions to:
cheryl.landmark@sympatico.ca

Remote Trails—Challenges and Solutions *con't from pg 4*

For both options, the idea is to use self-propelled vehicles, or even ATVs, to get to a remote part of the trail where a unique hiking experience can be enjoyed. Keep in mind that many sections of the trail prohibit the presence of motorized vehicles like ATVs on the actual trails, so plan ahead by choosing a designated ATV parking / staging area closer to trail access points.

Another way to get hikers a little further from their vehicles is to **place geocaches** in strategic locations along the trail. As this activity continues to grow in popularity, geocachers are constantly in search of new finds. Creating caches is easy, fun and often free! For ideas, or to entice geocachers to go after your cache, log onto www.geocaching.com and don't forget to register your cache. All you need to know is the GPS location of your cache, its approximate size or type, and a brief description or name. Remember never to place a physical cache in a provincial or national park, or in areas where the landowner may object. In these locations, you can safely create an EarthCache, a special place that people can visit to learn about a unique geoscience feature or aspect of our Earth. Try linking these EarthCaches to interpretive signage in parks to promote your trail and encourage stewardship and learning!

Combining hiking and other activities, like biking, canoeing / kayaking, or geocaching, can encourage new users to explore your trails, but so can events. Ask local club members if they have skill sets that can help you run events on your trails. Examples include: orienteering (traditional compass use); introduction to geocaching and GPS use; birding; and, natural history interpretation.

Remember, a well-used trail requires less maintenance and renewal!

VTA MARKETPLACE

Remember...all VTA members can place free hike-related ads in the VTA marketplace!! To place your ad, email Cheryl Landmark at cheryl.landmark@sympatico.ca

FEATURE PRODUCTS FROM THE VTA ON-LINE STORE AT www.voyageurtrail.ca

GPS Maps (Garmin units only) - available for download

Hiking trail guide of individual sections (PDF versions for download)

Remember...gift certificates are available for the on-line store!!

VOYAGEUR TRAIL ASSOCIATION YEARLY MEMBERSHIP FORM

FOR MORE DETAILS AND TO PURCHASE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES VISIT OUR ON-LINE STORE AT www.voyageurtrail.ca.

*Name(s): _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ Prov./State: _____ Postal/Zip Code: _____
 Please check one: ☐ New Member ☐ Renewal Phone (home): _____
 (cell): _____ Email Address: _____



MEMBERSHIP FEES:

Individual (1-year) —\$25.00 = _____
 Individual (3-year) —\$70.00 = _____
 Family or Group (1-year) —\$30.00 = _____
 Family or Group (3-year) —\$85.00 = _____
 (*please provide names)
 Student (full-time) - \$10.00 = _____
 Donations (tax receipt will be sent) = _____

Charitable Reg. #119261923RR0001

Gift Certificate for On-line Store (provide email for recipient and short message if desired)

_____ # _____ @\$5.00 = _____

VTA Crest—\$3.00 = _____
 2007 Guidebook*: _____
 Members \$25 _____
 Non-Members \$35 = _____
 (**limit of 2 per member)
 Shipping for mailed guidebooks—\$8.00 = _____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED

= _____

Make cheques payable and mail to:
 VOYAGEUR TRAIL ASSOCIATION
 PO Box 20040, 150 Churchill Blvd.
 Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 6W3
 12/10

cont'd on back

Please send my VTA newsletter via:
☐ Reminder to upload pdf from VTA web site.
 Or
☐ Postal delivery

The Voyageur Trail News is published three times per year. Your articles and photos are welcome!

Deadline for the next issue is April 1, 2010.

Mail to Cheryl Landmark, c/o Voyageur Trail Association, PO Box 20040, 150 Churchill Blvd., Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 6W3

Tel. 705-779-3409 or e-mail to cheryl.landmark@sympatico.ca

Articles in this newsletter can be copied if credit is given to the Voyageur Trail Association.

We're on the Web!
www.voyageurtrail.ca

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Bruce Mines/Thessalon: Volunteer contact needed

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Voyageur Trail News—Winter 2010



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Debbie Morettin 705-785-3247

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For information on any of these positions (especially the vacant ones), please contact us at our toll-free number 1-877-393-4003.

Voyageur Hiking Trail Users' Code

- Hike only along marked routes. Do not take short cuts.
- Do not climb fences.
- Carry out all garbage (if you can carry it in, you can carry it out)
- Light cooking fires at official campsites only. Drench fires after use. (or better still carry a lightweight hiker's stove)
- Leave flowers and plants for others to enjoy.
- Do not damage live trees or strip off bark.
- Protect and do not disturb wildlife.
- Keep dogs under control (leash if necessary) and follow your club's guidelines concerning dogs.
- Respect the privacy of people living off the trail. Walk around the edges of fields, not across them.
- Leave only your thanks and take nothing but photographs. BE A LOW-IMPACT HIKER!!



Declaration: I understand that the Voyageur Trail is a wilderness trail and some remote or little-used sections may be in poor condition due to falling trees or regrowth of vegetation. I understand I hike it at my own risk. I have read and will abide by the Trail Users' Code.

Signature _____

Do you wish to receive email reminders of VTA events?? Yes ☐ No ☐ If yes, supply email address on reverse side.

I WOULD LIKE TO HELP WITH:

◇ TRAIL DEVELOPMENT

◇ HIKE LEADER

◇ ORGANIZATION—EXECUTIVE, DIRECTORS

◇ SORRY NOT AT THIS TIME

◇ TRAIL MAINTENANCE

◇ LANDOWNER LIAISON, RECORDS, MAPS

◇ SPECIAL EVENTS, CONFERENCES, DINNERS

◇ NEWSLETTER, GUIDEBOOK, PHOTOGRAPHY

◇ PUBLICITY COMMITTEE



Voyageur Trail Association



- ◇ Please add my membership to the membership list of the club closest to my home, OR
- ◇ Consider me a member-at-large, OR
- ◇ Consider me a member of the following club _____.