



VOYAGEUR TRAIL NEWS

PUBLISHED BY THE VOYAGEUR TRAIL ASSOCIATION, A MEMBER OF F.O.H.T.A.

BOX 66, SAULT STE. MARIE, ONTARIO P6A 5L2

NO:35

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WINTER 1986/87



TAKING TO THE TRAILS - FEBRUARY STYLE

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 2 - vacant
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THE COVER

Sometimes it seems that the entire ski trail goes up'h'll, and yet it ends where you started. The first part of the Hoken Lein Trail at Stokely Creek was largely uphill, but there were some obvious downhills on the last half. Our cover photo was taken on an uphill section of the Hoken Lein Trail on an outing last February. Most people found this trail to be a good challenge, but everyone made it to the end. Ski trips are a good way to extend the hike season into the winter. The Saulteaux club has already had two outings this winter, and more are scheduled. See the details in the events section.

GREAT EFFORTS REWARDED

Four members of the Voyageur Trail Association are to become recipients of HIKE ONTARIO! Awards. They are Tom Allinson, Steve Dominy, Norm Leydielt, and Ernie Pringle. Tom has led or participated in countless hikes and work parties over the years and his experience and good nature has been welcomed by many participants on these events. Steve did an incredible amount of work over the past year in strengthening the Saulteaux Club. Norm and Ernie have contributed much in the way of trail

building and maintenance since the early days of the association. Ernie Pringle has been a tireless workhorse in the Saulteaux Section while Norm Leydielt has been the main spokesman for the Penewobikong Club over the years.

These awards are presented by HIKE ONTARIO! in recognition of an outstanding contribution to a hiking organization in Ontario. Nominees are selected by the individual organizations. The VTA nominees were finalized at the November 8 board meeting.

CONGRATULATIONS AND WAY TO GO gentlemen. Let's hope that these individuals will volunteer to stay with us for many years, and let's hope that many more members will be nominated for these awards in the future. Let us also remember the many people who have made a volunteer contribution, large or small, to the Voyageur Trail Association.

CLUB NEWS

On October 19, 1986, the VTA's Michipicoten Club of Wawa dedicated a portion of trail in memory of Sheila Renault. Sheila was a long time member of the Voyageur Trail Club, and acted as Secretary Treasurer since the Club's inception in 1976. A wooden diamond-shaped plaque with "Renault" carved into it was attached to a tree at the northern entrance to the trail. Peter Stinnissen, president of the parent Association dedicated the trail in memory of the heart of the Wawa Club, "Sheila Renault". Sheila is sadly missed by all of her fellow members.

The Michipicoten Club has initiated a program of recognition to the many hours of voluntary work performed by its members. A wooden plaque with member's surnames carved in it and painted yellow and blue (the Associ-

Hike Ontario!

OUTLOOK



Box 651, Station K, Ontario M4P 2H1

Conference high-point of Hike Ontario! year

By far the most positive and successful achievement of the past year was the second Hike Ontario! Conference held on the May long weekend in Guelph. This conference brought together members of the hiking fraternity from all parts of the province, and, indeed, the country. The 25 resolutions passed at the conference provided clear direction for future Hike Ontario! planning and activity, and provided an opportunity to strengthen the all-important com-

Conference is fun!

With all the talk about meetings, etc., you may think a hiking conference is Dullsville. 'Tain't so! Just ask any member who was at Guelph.

There were hiking opportunities (a red fox was spotted on one of the walks), in-city tours, energetic square dancing night, where amateurs had more fun than anybody. And, of course, good food at the Saturday barbecue and the Sunday pancake breakfast.

Highlight on Sunday was a slide presentation of the High Arctic by John and Janet Foster. After this, Beirde Brothers musical group captured their audience with entertainment ranging from fiddlers' reels to comic impressions (and have you ever seen a flute played by nose?).

Hike Ontario! executive and the Guelph trail members responsible for conference arrangements are to be congratulated. It was a great way to spend the weekend.

John Lawrence
Thames Valley Trail Association

Keep in touch, spread the word.
Please send news of your association's activities to:

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munications link between hikers and their provincial organization.

The success of the conference is in no small way due to the financial assistance of the BTA and the involvement and enthusiasm of many Bruce Trail Association participants. To all who contributed, a sincere thank-you from Hike Ontario!

Post-conference activity of Hike Ontario! has been primarily directed toward organizational restructuring. In the past, HO! has experienced difficulty recruiting and coordinating volunteers able to work effectively on projects of provincial scope. Under the plan currently under development the various areas of responsibility will be assumed, at least on a short term basis, by respective member trail associations. It is hoped that the Bruce Trail Association will assist HO! in the important government relations function — an area where it has demonstrated admirable ability and effectiveness.

Improving communication between the Bruce Trail Association and Hike Ontario! will be a high priority in the coming year. A proposal to increase the number of BTA representatives on the HO! board of directors will be considered at the

Reports back to the trail associations indicate the Hike Ontario! Broadening Horizons conference was an unqualified success and a great time had by all. As Gord Thompson points out, one result of the conference is an organizational restructuring of Hike Ontario! that can only benefit Ontario's trail associations and trails — and bring nearer every hiker's dream of a National Trail from sea to sea. Gord's report was given at the Bruce Trail Association's agm, the other reports first appeared in association newsletters.

next HO! AGM, along with a number of other necessary constitutional amendments.

The coming months promise to be interesting and important ones in the on-going work of Hike Ontario! I am happy to extend an invitation to any members of the Bruce Trail Association who wish to become involved. Contact me at home (416) 242-4397 or business (416) 791-1722. And to the members of other trail associations, too.

Gord Thompson
Hike Ontario! President

Conference a time for sharing

We shared ideas and experiences. We talked about existing trails and made plans for new trails. We took part in early morning bird-watching and jogging, and in a full programme of hiking on the area trails. We made use of the Nature Centre and Arboretum of the university, and took in the displays set up by the trail clubs and commercial enterprises.

Entertainment was varied and had something for everyone — slide shows, music, square dancing. The highlight for us all was Janet and John Foster's slide presentation

North to the Top of the World.

We ate very well. The Friday evening early arrivals enjoyed a wine and cheese party, on Saturday there was an outdoor barbecue lunch, on Sunday a pancake breakfast outdoors — the weather being reasonably cooperative! The banquet was held on Sunday night, at which time the Merit Awards were given out.

The Ministry of Natural Resources' representative, Norman Richards, gave us some insight into the evolving role of the Government in Ontario hiking trails. The focus was on

management plans and the possibility of resurrecting a committee of landowners, trail associations and government.

The opening panel discussed opportunities for Ontario hiking and the proposed National Trail. Trail managers were asked to look ahead and plan to achieve their goals. Workshops covered most pertinent areas.

I was a panel member at the Town Hall Meeting on Sunday morning where twenty-five resolutions came under discussion. Two of those approved pertained to leadership training for hike leaders, and a skills programme for trail maintainers, that these be taught to volunteers as part of on-going programmes.

Also approved was a resolution that work on trail expansions be developed by interested clubs to link and form a trail network in Ontario, to become part of the National Trail. It was also resolved that the principal follow-up activity of the conference

Conference a success!

Well, we pulled it off! The Hike Ontario Broadening Horizons conference held at the University of Guelph on the Victoria Day weekend was a success. Over 200 people attended the conference over the 4-day period. The weather was excellent Friday and Saturday, but slightly damp Sunday evening and Monday. The Guelph Trail Club and the Grand Valley Trails Association did an excellent job in organizing the conference.

On the Monday morning we held the draw for the two Robert Bateman prints. The winners were Brenda Vanstone from Toronto and Alan Watson from Guelph. Brenda selected the Arctic Terns and Alan selected the Morning Dew-Roe Deer. Congratulations to both winners and thanks to all who supported the conference by purchasing tickets.

Mike Curtis
Guelph Trail Club

should be a Ten Year Management Plan for Hike Ontario with specific goals and objectives and input from the executives of member trail clubs.

Compliments should go to the hosts, the Guelph Trail Club, for a

well organized meeting. If the interest aroused and the enthusiasm carries on, Hike Ontario! should have a lively and productive future.

Moir Drummond
Rideau Trail Association

The National Trail: What, where, when and how

It might be considered by some as a grandiose scheme to establish a trail from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Do not regard it as having originated from an urge for bigness, an offering to the great god Mega. No, our efforts are inspired by those same principles and yearnings shared by outdoor enthusiasts and nature-lovers, all the pleasures and benefits of the simple pastime of hiking.

While the association's objectives are to encourage and assist in the development of a national hiking trail system and to foster the growth of local and regional trails and clubs, we endeavour to achieve through these aims the preservation of places of natural and historic value; the promotion of healthy outdoor activities and the appreciation of our natural and cultural heritage.

Servant, not master

The trail is designed as a servant, not a master. If it has one unique feature, it is the potential and power to unite, to forge a physical bond unifying trail clubs, outdoor organizations and other supporting people across the country. That force is needed to give strength to individual club efforts and to help guard against such threats to club advancement or even existence as land or resource development.

I use the present tense in speaking of the national trail, although as yet not one trail-maker has been placed. In the first place, I have grown tired of talking in futuristic terms and, second, sections of trail already exist, though unrecognized, for great distances.

Trail guidelines

What are our guidelines for the plotting of a route? We look for existing trails which lie in a general east-west direction, preferably close to urban areas for greater convenience of the populace as well as to help protect regions of historic, scenic and natural value which might be under more imminent threat from development. Ease of access by good highways is a major consideration and attitude is a factor when we seek year-round use. We aspire to the most desirable route for the long term, but pay heed where ready access is available.

In total length, we are probably looking at the equivalent of fifteen Bruce Trails, a continuous chain spanning the mainland provinces and jumping to island trail systems.

National network

But we also look up from our efforts occasionally, like a hiker does from the immediate trail ahead to

search the horizon. It is not inconceivable that the national trail will become the backbone of an entire national trail network with intersecting systems. British Columbia has adopted the term "corridor" in its recreational trail proposals, as trails cannot be truly enjoyed without an agreeable border or buffer zone. That "thin line" on the map thickens.

Coast-to-coast parkland

Look ahead. Imagine a belt of parkland extending from coast to coast within two to three hours reach of most Canadians, wide enough to accommodate a multiplicity of trails with overnight shelters; parkland which is a haven for wild life and protects the grandeur of our landscapes for the future. That's what we can see on our horizon. For now, we concentrate on the thin line. It's within measurable reach. But we must look beyond.

Hikers don't look only at the horizon ahead, they look also behind, at the way they have come. Hikers of future years will look back at us to judge whether we knew where we were going.

Doug Campbell
National Trail Association
of Canada

ation colours) will be attached to a tree as each member volunteers a specified number of hours of work with the Club. These members will thus have a certain section of trail dedicated to them. Phil Egan has offered to make the plaques.

The Saulteaux Club got the 1987 activity slate off to a successful start with a "bushwhack" ski outing on January 10. Fifteen people enjoyed the mild weather and were even treated to some unexpected afternoon sunshine on the terrain around the north end of Goulais Ave. Most were surprised at how good the ski conditions were in the bush, after seeing very little snow in Sault Ste Marie. We were able to ski along some of the Voyageur Trail, but trip leader Tom Allinson led us "exploring" to the north after we reached the deep canyon at West Davignon Creek. Lunch was devoured in a grove of pines on an island in a frozen pond. Then, more exploring revealed a number of sharp forested valleys and ridges, which made for some interesting travel. Participants on this outing probably have very little turkey left in them now, but no one seemed to find the going too tough.

TRAIL MIX

The Voyageur Trail will be closed this year on Monday February 15 for the entire day.

Over the past several years, the old V.T. Guidebooks have been sold with the understanding that the Thessalon Section would be available on request to purchasers when it became available. It was never completed in time for the First Edition of the Guidebook, but it will be included in the new Second Edition which is due out this spring. A decision has been made to give a copy of the Thessalon Section to old Guidebook holders who want this

Section, but who are not buying the New Edition. If you have a Guidebook, and would like a copy of the description for the Thessalon Section only, please write and let us know within the next month so that extra copies can be printed.

MIDDAY, CBC TV's noon hour news and information program has announced what we've known all along - that walking is THE thing to do. The newest trend of the 1980's is walking. Prominent shoe manufacturers such as Nike are right on the bandwagon, going into production of light weight running shoes called "walking shoes", hoping to capitalize on this "new" activity. It's nice to know that other people will finally discover our little secret - that walking is fun and good for you!

Material for the next newsletter should reach the editor by April 10. We plan to feature out-door cooking, so if you have a favourite camping recipe or piece of advice pertaining to camp cookery, why not share it with fellow members. Also, Clubs should remember that the next issue is the one to put your summer schedule in.

The Voyageur Trail has stirred up some interest in hikers from outside of northern Ontario. Groups from the Rideau and Bruce Trail Associations and from Germany may be hiking our trails in the summer of 1987. Let's throw our support behind these groups and help them to have a great outdoor experience. Perhaps they will return with their friends.

The executive of the Voyageur Trail Association would like to appeal to any interested hikers living near the intended route of the Trail to consider some trail building in their area. If the eventual dream of the Trail as a continuous path from Manitoulin Island to Thunder Bay is to be met, activity by such people will be

essential, particularly in some of the lesser populated areas. If you live around Pancake Bay, Nipigon, Dorion, or some of the smaller population centres and are interested in perhaps arranging a couple of trail building work parties, why not write or phone Peter Stinnissen (call collect) or one of the other members of the executive. Let us know of your interest. Of course, we would be interested in hearing from you if you live in a large population centre too.

The latest membership list has been compiled, and is included in the back of this newsletter. If you note a mistake in spelling, postal code, phone number, etc, please let us know of the mistake.

Excerpts from
ANNALS OF THE MUSHROOM TRAIL - 1986

Sister Marie Kopin sent in a delightful account entitled "Annals of the Mushroom Trail". It chronicles her trip, along with five friends, into the Algoma district for a six day exploration this past August. Some of this trip took place on the Voyageur Trail. She notes that the mean age of her group was 45. Much of the groups story appears here.

Aug 1 -

We set up camp by flashlight at the Lion's Club Campground at Point Des Chenes (Oak Point) and realized that besides the mushroom book and bird book, we should have brought a FRENCH book.

Aug 2 -

We were awakened early by our neighbors and enjoyed a breakfast of ham and eggs, dried toast, and rice

cakes. Thus fortified, we broke camp and packed for a one day jaunt to Gros Cap (Big Cape). The trail included a sharp climb up, many ups and downs on the crest, large rock ledges and outcroppings with views of the lake, inland lakes, and of course a sharp decline off the ridge.

The scenery was breathtaking, but it wasn't the only thing that took our breath away. A porcupine climbed a tree just ahead of us and we watched his progress to the top. A group of sandhill cranes got the surprise of their lives as we rounded a corner, and there were fresh bear droppings in the path. There was also considerable evidence of beaver activity in the area.

Of interest were several members of the orchid family, stems of indian pipe, squawroot, and many types of fungi (at least 30) including chanterelle, russula, cervinus, platyphyla, amanita, boleet, coprinus, and more. We brought several select kinds back and enjoyed them with dinner.

We spent the night at Agawa Bay Campground in Lake Superior Provincial Park, where we all enjoyed a good, but cold nights sleep.

Aug 3-

A steady rain harmonized on our tents during the early morning hours. New leaks in old tents and new holes in all tents invited water inward. While some of us became wet, it became obvious that one of our members had too much square footage in the tent.

After a standup breakfast and re-organization of day packs, we headed gallantly for Orphan Lake. The trail guide said "moderate in difficulty and we were motivated by curiosity on how a lake could be orphaned. Near the end of the 11 km hike, we stood near the

edge and saw how this body of water was completely separated, in fact, beautifully isolated from Lake Superior; an independant orphan with surroundings like the original.

The smell of the place was fresh and wet with all the forest incenses, creating a special odor above and beyond the usual insect repellent. Our feet walked over stone steps, log steps, steps made by roots, pathways of dirt, and welcomed soft pine needles and mosses. Bridges made of logs took us across streams and gave variety to the ups and downs of the trail.

The sounds of the day were the finest imaginable-- water dripping over rocks, a tripartite waterfall, small streams speaking out from beneath ferns and yew, quaking balsam and trembling aspen, the footfall of boots and the swish of water bottles in packs. Colours were striking on the trail. Nature did her share, but we helped with our clothing. After the first reading of the Sunday, the group began storing up remembrances of natural discoveries: orchids, ferns, mushrooms, ladyslippers, waterlilies, and yellow birds.

At the end of this trek, we had time left to see Agawa Rock Pictographs. This 2 km walk led down a rock ravine to the edge of Lake Superior where the natural art gallery is a rock canvas. The Ojibway Indians used red ochre to paint fish, boat symbols, and animals. These paintings commemorate the four-day crossing by 50 men in four canoes from northern Michigan to the site where we stood.

Finally, we returned to a familiar campsite for a swim, a meal, a walk on the beach, and a study of the stars. No Question: There is a Lord of the Sabbath.

Aug 4-

We are not much aware of the calendar or clock. There was a light rain during the night. The morning was rather leisurely as we prepared our packs for the two night trip that we planned to begin that afternoon. We spotted the first turtle that morning as an external frame dome-type tent went by, carried by two men.

A short noon-time walk at Trapper's Trail included spotting some moose tracks. Then, just as we were ready to leave, at the parking area, we saw Mr. Moose himself.

In mid-afternoon, we drove to the trail head for the Towab Trail to Agawa Falls and River. We hiked in about two hours, first along a wide and gently sloping old road, then trail which brought us to the river, with its burnt rock pool and numerous rapids. The cliffs on the opposite side of the river were imposing and impressive.

Camp was made on the sandy and rocky shore of the river. The plan: tomorrow hike as a day trip the 15 or so km to Agawa Falls and back for another night at the same camp. To sleep with the rush of the water.

Aug 5-

As usual (it was getting to be routine) we were awakened at 3:00 AM by gentle rain which continued until 8:00 am. At 8:30, everyone was finally up and around, and the breakfast of "Sunsweet Instant" and "prunes and apricots" tasted good. We started off in misty fog, but spirits were not dampened. The trail followed the river for about 1/2 km, and then turned upward seriously, especially challenging

with slippery rocks, roots and more roots. It was ~~not~~ to root, hoping the mud would hold. At the top, we found we had to go back down (slide down) the cliff we had just scrambled up. At the bottom, a big rock welcomed us for a much needed respite that included stories and jokes. The Algoma Train rumbled on promptly at 1:15. We met two girls, both coming and going. Ah to be young and fast again. They made the entire 26 km trip in a day. Then it was onwards, over streams and moss-covered sand plateaus along the river. At last, the FALLS. It was here that some adventure began.

Four of us headed up yet another rocky, root strewn, and wet cliff towards the top of the falls, while the remainder of the group rested and swam at a lovely campsite at the bottom. The falls were gorgeous, roaring in all their splendour. It was now time to go back, except that Marie, who was slower than the other three members of our group on the climb to the top, had taken a wrong fork in the path. She was now up on the canyon rim, walking the trestles of the Algoma Central Railway, looking for the rest of the group and the falls. Fresh footprints and bright orange flagging were abundant enough, but the roar of the falls kept getting further away. The trestles soon led into a tunnel in the solid rock, so Marie retraced her steps. Meanwhile, the rest of us headed back to camp in two groups (one of three people and the other of two), with each group thinking that Marie was in the other group. When the groups met up, what a surprise to find no Marie. Marie now arrived at the falls, and then at the campsite. NO ONE WAS THERE. "Well, one has to keep going", so it was back off down the trail. After about 1/2 hour the group was encountered. It was a happy reunion indeed!

The rest of the walk back was uneventful except for a grouse startled in the bush and all the jokes. Camp was reached at 7:00 PM. Dinner was delectable: chicken, rice and beans. Swimming was refreshing, no matter how suited (er- most of us weren't). A small fire warmed hearts, socks, and toes. Mushroom count for the day: 20 or more species, including the bright orange sulphur shelf and huge bolete mirabilis ...Off to sleep...stars were lovely...and it was the first night with no rain.

Aug 6-

With the rainless night, the trail was much improved. The trail back to the parked cars took about 2 hours. We passed a family on their way in. The three little boys were each carrying a part of the camping gear, but said "Daddy's pack weighs over 50 pounds".

Then, it was over to the ice cream store, alias the petrol stop. The car was thirsty and so were we.

Off we drove to Rabbit Blanket Campground, where we chose a site overlooking the lake. After various individual afternoon activities, we had a turkey rice dish with oriental touch. Dessert was individual red, white, and blue cheese cakes in graham crust. The red and blue were berries used to decorate the top. After supper, it was time for a walking tour of the sandy beach and a look at a tree growing with its roots wrapped around all sides of a boulder. A fern paradise led us back to the fern book. Polypody, bracken, spinulose woodfern, long beech fern and sensitive fern were identified. Three loons were spotted on the lake. There was also one on the shore (the blue-hooded, dirty jean variety which is common in the north woods).

Aug 7-

We did the Nokomis Trail (5 km) for morning exercise, in about 2 hours. Red bunch berries, blue clintonia berries, blackish sarsaparilla berries and pearly everlasting made the many-greened forest floor look like Christmas! A beardy gray moss hung from lowland evergreen trees. It was like a cold swamp. We climbed a 130 m cliff, over cobblestones left by 15 past beaches of Lake Superior, to overlooks of Old Woman Bay. We never did see the face of the old woman in the rocks over the lake. Nor did we see the line between the Great Lakes deciduous forests and the boreal evergreen forest, although it is supposed to be obvious in the fall. We did see a raven riding a thermal overhead, and miles and miles of forest, sky, and sea.

We enjoyed the beach that afternoon. We watched gulls who in turn watched us (they are used to being fed by tourists). After supper, the South Old Woman Trail was the easiest of the entire trip, but still a bit much for an old woman. We saw a bottle gentian and identified long beech fern. We crossed the river on huge rocks, and saw lots of little waterfalls. Moss and ferns grew on the rocks. In the evening light, the whole woods looked enchanted. Maybe thats how you feel at the end of a beautiful time in the woods.

To bed for an early start back home in the morning. Group consensus: LET'S DO IT AGAIN SOON.

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 7 - Bushwhack ski outing north of Carpin Beach Rd to Red Rock Road. Meet at 10:00 with lunch at the Stedmans Second Line Plaza near gas bar.

April 4 - "Hug a Tree" ski (conditions permitting) outing near Walls Lake. Meet at 10:00 with a lunch at Stedmans Second Line Plaza near gas bar.

May 2 - Hike Echo Ridges Section - Tower Lake to Wilson Lake. Meet near Suny's gas bar at Churchill Plaza with a lunch.

Please note that trip leaders are unpaid volunteers. You are encouraged to participate, but at your own risk. For winter trips, a suggestion is to have some dry clothing waiting in the car for the end of a trip.



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OUTLOOK editor, NORMAN DAY, will again be leading BED AND BREAKFAST HIKES in ENGLAND this summer. In May he'll be back hiking on the ISLE OF WIGHT and along the SOUTH DOWNS WAY. In August he'll be helping Canterbury celebrate