



Voyageur Trail News

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NO. 126 Spring 2017

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Published by the
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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.

The Voyageur Trail News is published three times per year. Your articles and photos are welcome! **Deadline for the next issue is August 1, 2017.**

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

ADDRESS CHANGE

The franchise that was hosting our postal box has decided to shut their doors. Therefore, effective immediately, our address will be P.O. Box 20040, Sault Ste. Marie, P6A 6W3.

NEWSLETTER CHANGES

Dawn White (formerly Elmore), has stepped down as newsletter layout volunteer but continues her position as member at large with the club, focusing on the Strategic Planning committee. Thanks Dawn for all the effort you have put into the newsletter in the past! Thanks also to Tiffany Runge for helping out with this edition.

It was decided that this would be a good opportunity to start updating the newsletter to reflect the changes both in technology and at the VTA.

This will include simplifying the layout and making it more technology friendly for those who read it online. Also, note that this will be the last newsletter published with the Saulteaux hike schedule. Instead, the schedule will be online on a monthly basis and will be emailed out to members. With the cost of postage and printing continually climbing and the ease of online use, it is likely that we will eventually phase out the paper copies completely. If you have not yet sent us your email address now would be a good time.

GLENVIEW TRAILS

Effective immediately, the Glenview Trails will no longer be available to the public or to VTA members. The trail will be relocated north of the property over the next couple of months. We will publish the reroute on the website when it is complete.

MAINTENANCE WEEK KICKOFF MAY 14th

Come join us for our 2nd annual maintenance kickoff day and help get our trails in shape for the summer hiking season. A chili lunch and some snacks will be served at the Hiawatha Sugar Shack.

SAULTEAUX PRESIDENT STEPPING DOWN

Gayle Phillips has stepped down from her position as the Saulteaux Club president.

Her announcement at the Saulteaux annual dinner on March 31st was met with friendly booing. Gayle has been a fixture with the club and the VTA since the beginning, having joined the club in 1993. At the time, she could not find any information about the Association, Trail and/or Club, so volunteered as the first Publicity Director in 1994.

She designed the first brochures, display boards, slide presentations, posters and eventually the first website. She also helped with the layout of the last two guidebooks and laid out the newsletter for several years, starting in 1995. Gayle served as president of the VTA between

1998 and 2000. Those were very active years, where we hosted over 100 guests at the two-day Hike Ontario Annual Meeting, joined the Trans Canada Trail and participated in the Trans Canada Trail Relay in 2000.

She also served as president of the Saulteaux Voyageur Trail Club for over a decade and represented the club on many committees, including the HUB Trail Committee. She arranged and chaired all local meetings, did local publicity and events, planned the outing schedule and oversaw the maintenance of the 50+km of trails in and around the city! Thank you Gayle for all your hard work, you will be missed around the meeting table.

STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE *by Dawn Elmore*

For a number of years, the VTA President and a Strategic Planning Committee have worked to gather feedback on the vision, mission, and future direction of the VTA.

A series of SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) exercises was completed with a number of VTA clubs, including the Saulteaux, Coureurs de Bois, and Casques Isles. In addition, the Ontario Trails Council (OTC) assisted in administering an online survey to trail users, members, and the Coordinating Council. In total, feedback was gathered from approximately 41

individuals who filled out surveys and 40 individuals who participated in a SWOT exercise.

On March 5, 2017, a group of six VTA members with representation from Thunder Bay, Elliot Lake, and Sault Ste. Marie gathered for a full day workshop to carefully review the feedback and formulate a first draft of a new Strategic Plan. On April 9, the Coordinating Council discussed the first draft. We are excited to share the draft vision, mission, and strategic objectives. There is still time to provide input! Please send any feedback to elmoredawn@hotmail.com.

VISION: The vision describes where we see the VTA in five years' time:

In five years, the VTA will have a series of high-quality well-marked and well-maintained trail systems between Thunder Bay and Sudbury. Through the development of strategic partnerships and trail users, these non-motorized trail systems will be vibrant, sustainable, and well-used by outdoor enthusiasts of all ages, and in particular youth, contributing to the health, well-being, and environmental integrity of northern communities.

MISSION: The mission describes the VTA's core function and reason for existence:

The VTA, through partnerships, promotes, maintains, and develops a public system of hiking trails between Thunder Bay and Sudbury. Through the provision of expertise, environmental stewardship, and recreational opportunities, the VTA is a significant contributor to the health and well-being of the communities its trails traverse.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES: The seven strategic objectives are the major areas of focus that enable the VTA to meet its five-year vision and are based on the surveys, SWOT feedback, and discussion at the Strategic Planning Workshop. Each objective is accompanied by a series of action items listed in priority order (as ranked in the workshop).

Strategic Objective 1: Increase Promotional Activities

The VTA will leverage strategic partnerships and a range of promotional activities to increase trail usage in a sustainable manner.

Strategic Objective 2: Increase Land and Water Trail Usage

The VTA will increase land and water trail usage by 25% in five years' time.

Strategic Objective 3: Build and Leverage Strategic Partnerships

The VTA will build and leverage strategic partnerships to further its vision and mission.

Strategic Objective 4: Engage Youth as Trail Users

The VTA will actively seek to engage youth as trail users, not necessarily as club members.

Strategic Objective 5: Enhance Trail Maintenance and Restoration

The VTA will build and leverage its expertise and partnerships to enhance its capacity for trail maintenance and restoration.

Strategic Objective 6: Develop Volunteers and Expertise

The VTA will build organizational capacity and sustainability through volunteer development and engagement.

Strategic Objective 7: Promote Environmental Stewardship

The VTA will strengthen its leadership role in environmental stewardship in all its activities.



Six Saulteaux members took the Hike Ontario Wilderness Day Hike Leader course in April at the Sault Ste. Marie Conservation Sugar Shack, taught by Mike Landmark.

500 DAYS IN THE WILD *by Gayle Phillips*

Self-proclaimed “storyteller” Dianne Whelan passed through Sault Ste. Marie in March on her journey to traverse the entire length of Trans Canada Trail (TCT) from coast to coast to coast.

Dianne is an award-winning independent adventure film maker, author and journalist. Her credits include 40 days spent in the base camp at Mount Everest and traversing the high arctic with the Canadian military in Alert.

She says her mother inspired her to explore the TCT when she “purchased” a kilometre long ago.

Dianne’s focus is to meld the traditional knowledge of the builders of the trail with the new-age science of back-country travel, for instance the new “app” anyone can download from the TCT providing a map of the route. She considers the trail “Canadian Art” and is fascinated by the people she has come to know along the way.

Dianne started her journey in Newfoundland in July of 2015 and admits it will take a few years not only to do the entire distance, but film her adventures to produce a movie about it and write books. She admits she is not an extreme athlete and is getting it done by concentrating on one section at a time, living in the area and getting to know folks who can give her their best advice on how to do the trail successfully while taking care of herself.



The Voyageur Trail Association got to know her when she reached out to members of the clubs between Iron Bridge and Sault Ste. Marie. She sent an email to us letting us know that she intended to snowshoe pulling a sleigh behind her with her camping equipment on the Voyageur Trail between the two communities in February! Not a typical email. As more and more of our members got to meet her and help her in accomplishing her goal, we found out about her journey and now will continue to follow her as she makes her way across Canada. I, personally, can’t wait to see the end product film when all is said and done. We wish her all our best as she embarks on her long paddle between Sault Ste. Marie and Thunder Bay in May!

To follow the project on the Internet, visit:
www.500daysinthewild.com or for daily updates
 visit the Facebook page for 500 Days at:
<https://www.facebook.com/500Daysinthewild/>

CELEBRATE CANADA’S 150th BIRTHDAY... IN A BIG CANOE!

Eager to get out on the water, 20 paddlers have already signed up for this adventure, and we’ve barely finished winter!

The brigade will consist of two North canoes on loan from Voyageur Cookhouse and Lodge (thanks Frank and Gail!) and Parks Canada (thanks Fort St. Joseph National Historic Site!). We are lucky to have the use of the Montreal canoe from Naturally Superior Adventures (Thanks NSA!) and another North canoe from Bob Collins.

At this time we need paddlers who are available to paddle the whole or a portion of the distance from Batchewana to Sault Ste. Marie, during all or part of Days 1-4 (evening of June 28 to noon of July 1). However, if there is sufficient interest, then perhaps we will be able to crew another BIG canoe for all seven (7) days!



The Sault Ste. Marie BIG Canoe Brigade – Batchewana to Thessalon, June 28-July 4, 2017



Please visit <http://voyageurbrigade.org/future-brigades/sault-ste-marie-ontario-brigade-june-28-to-july-3/> to register.

The Sault Ste. Marie Brigade will depart Batchewana Bay bound for Goulais River, June 29. On June 30 the brigade will paddle from Goulais River to the Sault Ste. Marie Canal National Historic Site. On July 1 we will paddle through the locks at Sault Ste. Marie Canal

National Historic Site as part of their Canada Day “Parade of Paddles” festivities (canoes/kayaks of local paddlers will join the flotilla for this event). The Brigade will continue via Lake George to Women’s Institute Park at Richards Landing. On July 2, 2017 we will pass Sailor’s Encampment to Fort St. Joseph. We will participate in a Parks Canada event at Fort St. Joseph on July 3 and then we will head to Hilton Beach. On July 4 the brigade will paddle from Hilton Beach, visit Bruce Mines and finish in Thessalon. Practices will be held in May and June in the Algoma area.

The Sault Ste. Marie Canoe Brigade will be one of 12 throughout Canada supported by the Voyageur Brigade Society. Check out the full description at <http://voyageurbrigade.org/future-brigades/>

Come and join us!