



Voyageur Trail News



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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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info@voyageurtrail.ca

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



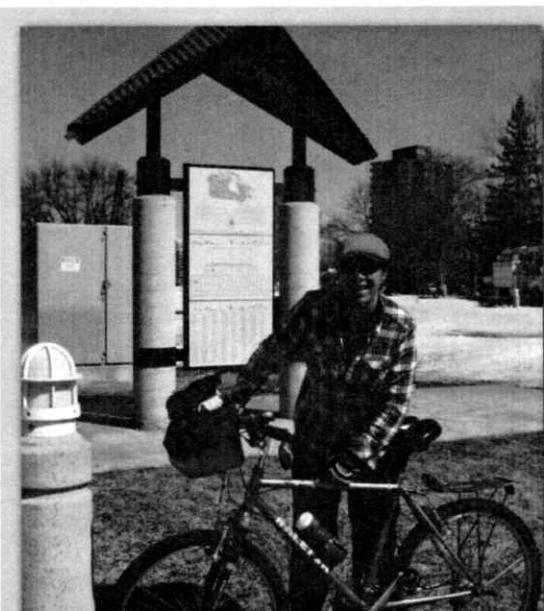
Please visit <http://voyageurbrigade.org/future-brigades/sault-ste-marie-ontario-brigade-june-28-to-july-3/> to register.

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!



Dianne poses in front of the TCT Pavilion on the Sault Ste. Marie waterfront showing us the vintage TCT Relay 2000 bicycle she was lent to do the trip by former TCT Relay Coordinator, Mike Landmark.

YOUNG HIKERS' PROJECT

Hike Ontario is rolling out a renewed commitment to the engagement of children & youth with hiking and the outdoors. The Young Hikers Project was created to foster the appreciation of Ontario's hiking and walking opportunities among young Ontarians and to inspire young people to take action in the protection, preservation and growth of Ontario's footpaths. Its goal is to facilitate this appreciation by providing activities for youth leaders, and curriculum focused lessons for educators, as well as links to resources for parents, with one goal in mind – to get youth outside and on the beautiful trails of Ontario.

Check out our redesigned website:
yhp.hikeontario.com.

Looking for strategies to engage youth in your group or school with hiking? A new workshop: "Introduction to Young Hikers Activity Resource Kit" covers youth engagement ideas, the promotion and implementation of hiking activities for families, children and youth, and an in-depth look at the Young Hikers Activity Resource Kit, which is a valuable guide to get started on the path to introducing young people to the experiences of embracing nature. Contact us at info@hikeontario.com

OUTING & TRAIL MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

Interested in trail maintenance in and around Sault Ste. Marie?

Trimming trees and putting up blazes is an ongoing job on the Voyageur Trail. Work parties are ongoing spring, summer and fall. If you would like to spend some time helping us to keep the trail well-marked and free from undergrowth, please send your contact information to Don at: mcgormd@hotmail.com or call 705-945-1573 (leave a message).

Sun., Apr. 30 ~ Hike a section of the HUB Trail. Call Gayle at 705-942-1891 for meeting place and time which will be decided a week before the event.

Sun., May 14 - May 21 ~ Trail Maintenance Week – Carole's kick-off to work parties for the upcoming year! The kick-off is scheduled to take place at the SSM Conservation Authority's Sugar Shack. Watch for more info in your in-boxes, on the Facebook page and on the VTA calendar on our website.

Saturdays: May 27, June 3, June 10, June 17 and June 24 ~ Big Canoe practice paddle. We will take a North Canoe for a spin at a local lake. You are welcome to join us. You need a PFD and a paddle. We have all of the other safety equipment. Call Mark or Cheryl for the details 705-254-2356. There is room for 7 paddlers in the canoe. First come first served. You will be required to sign a VTA waiver. A number of VTA and Soo Naturalists members are participating in the "Canada 150 Sault Ste. Marie Brigade" June 28-July 5. Find out more at <http://voyageurbrigade.org/future-brigades/sault-ste-marie-ontario-brigade-june-28-to-july-3/>

Sun., May 28 ~ the Saulteaux Club will be participating at the Family Market (Under the Tent) event at Crimson Ridge from 12 Noon to 9 pm with a display table and escorted hikes of the loop trail. The event will feature local vendors, music, family activities, food and beverages (www.golfrimsonridge.com). To volunteer to assist with the Saulteaux Club component please contact Don at: mcgormd@hotmail.com or call 705-945-1573 (leave a message).

Sun., June 11 (tentative date) ~ Hike with Chris and Carole. Check the website calendar, facebook and/or call Carole (705-649-2235) one week prior for details and/or possible date changes.

Wed., June 21 ~ Evening hike to celebrate the Summer Solstice: Enjoy the evening (and perhaps the sunset) from the Gros Cap Bluffs. Approximately 3km walk, mostly level, from Jackson Island Road access point. Come prepared for bugs! Meet at Market Mall at 7pm. Behaved pets welcome. Call Susan for more information 705-949-4105.

Sat., July 1 ~ "Parade of Paddles" through the SSM Canal. Bring your canoe/kayak and "lock thru" with the SSM Canoe Brigade. The lock drops at 10:00 AM.

Mon., July 3 ~ Canada 150 events at Fort St. Joseph National Heritage Site. Several VTA and Soo Nats members will be there as part of the SSM Canoe Brigade...why not head to the Fort to see if the paddlers made it there?

Sun., July 9 ~ (tentative date) ~ Hike with Chris and Carole. Check the website calendar, facebook and/or call Carole (705-649-2235) one week prior for details and/or possible date changes.

NOTE TO SAULTEAUX CLUB MEMBERS... With possible new leaders looking to schedule outings after the leadership courses in April, some leaders may wish to decide a week before a date that they are interested in leading an outing. It is CRUCIAL for Club members to report an up-to-date email address so you will be informed on last-minute additions to our future schedules. We assure you that email addresses will NOT be shared for any other purpose than Club news so please send your email address to: info@voyageurtrail.ca now!