



VOYAGEUR TRAIL NEWS

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THE GLORY OF
MOUNT GWYNNE,
SCHREIBER SECTION



THE NIP AND TUCK

from an essay by Charles Hunt

The following is a short history of the Bruce Mines and Algoma Railway. A small portion of the Desbarats Section of the Trail follows the old roadbed of the "Nip and Tuck".

"The Bruce Mines and Algoma Railroad (BM & AR) was chartered in 1899, to build a railroad from Bruce Station (CPR) to the Rock Lake Copper Mines". A distance of approximately 15 miles.

Construction of the railroad began in 1900 and was completed to the Rock Lake Mine Mill (Red Mill) by the fall of 1901.

"Much of the line followed the broad valley of the Thessalon River, which widens into Ottertail, Gordon and Rock Lakes, in its southward course. Sweeping curves, sidehill construction, minimal blasting and three major trestles over the Thessalon tell the story in general terms".

The railroad had two big customers, the Rock Lake Mining Company and Bruce Copper Mine Ltd. (B.C.M.), as well as a passenger service. Unfortunately luck was not on the railroad's side for the B.C.M. found very little copper and thus very little revenue for the BM & AR. To make matters worse, the Rock Lake Mine closed down in 1903, only two years after the railroad had opened the line to the area. It is no wonder that the little railroad was tabbed with the name "Nip and Tuck" by the local residents!

New ideas were conjured to put the "Nip and Tuck" back on its feet. One scheme was to extend the line to James Bay.

The event that brought the "Nip and Tuck" together again was the development of a quarry half way between Jack Island and Eagle Point. During 1913 and the early part of 1914 the quarry was very profitable, quarrying a type of sedimentary rock called "Trap rock" used mainly in the construction of roads.

Nevertheless, by the end of 1914, the world was at war and help was now needed towards the war effort and the quarry operations were slowly terminated. "By mid-summer, 1917, the quarry was forced to close because the company was unable to hire boats to haul the rock".

In 1913 the "Nip and Tuck" had been reorganised under a new name "the Lake Huron and Northern Ontario Railway Co." However the reorganisation did not stop the demise of the company.

The last passenger train to run on the northern section of the railroad ran on July 12 1916. "By 1918 most of the rails had been salvaged to assist the war effort." During the depression years a scrap dealer retrieved what was left of the LH & NO rail and "the right of way was sold for taxes." Even though the rail is gone, to this day the raised roadbed can be traced right to the Rock Lake Mill. It remains a mute testimonial to the heyday of railroading and is a visible link with our past.

A NEW TRAIL TO CONQUER

(from the Bruce Trail News, Winter 1980)

The world's longest hiking trail to connect the Appalachian Trail in the east with the Lewis and Clark Trail in the west thus linking the U.S. coast-to-coast, has won presidential approval as part of the national trails system. To stretch 3 246 miles over seven states, the North Country Trail will meander through a changing panorama of scenic splendors and points of historical interest.

Although completion of the trail will probably take 20 years, about 300 miles are already open to hikers. The National Forest Service has completed about half the trail miles under its jurisdiction.



This hiking route, now in the works, will make the Appalachian Trail seem like a mere stroll.

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NEW SIGNS ALONG THE TRAIL!

The Voyageur Trail Association has adopted a new sign to be used at access points but out of sight of roadways. This sign, a replica of which appears below, incorporates the silhouette of a hiker, circled in green, with the name of our trail -VOYAGEUR TRAIL-below it for identification.

This sign, under the new Trespass to Property Act, 1980, means that hiking only is permitted. Although the word 'only' is stressed, and thus a strong negative meaning is inherent in the sign, we feel that it is far less offensive than signs that have negative words on them.

Remember, the Voyageur Trail is in large part on private land and we owe our landowners our sincere gratitude and respect for the privilege of the use of their land for our pleasure. Use the trail and follow the Trail Users' Code.



NOTICE

GUIDEBOOK OWNERS

If you have purchased our Voyageur Trail Guidebook, the Desbarats Section, consisting of 2 sheets (4 pages) of description and 2 maps, are contained in this newsletter. If your copies were not attached, or if there are any errors of omission or duplication of pages, please notify the Secretary.

Remember, for your purchase price, you will yet receive, at no extra cost, the Echo Ridges and Thessalon Sections when they are mapped and described. This will provide you with a guidebook for approximately 200 km of rugged and beautiful hiking trail.