

# VOYAGEUR TRAIL NEWS

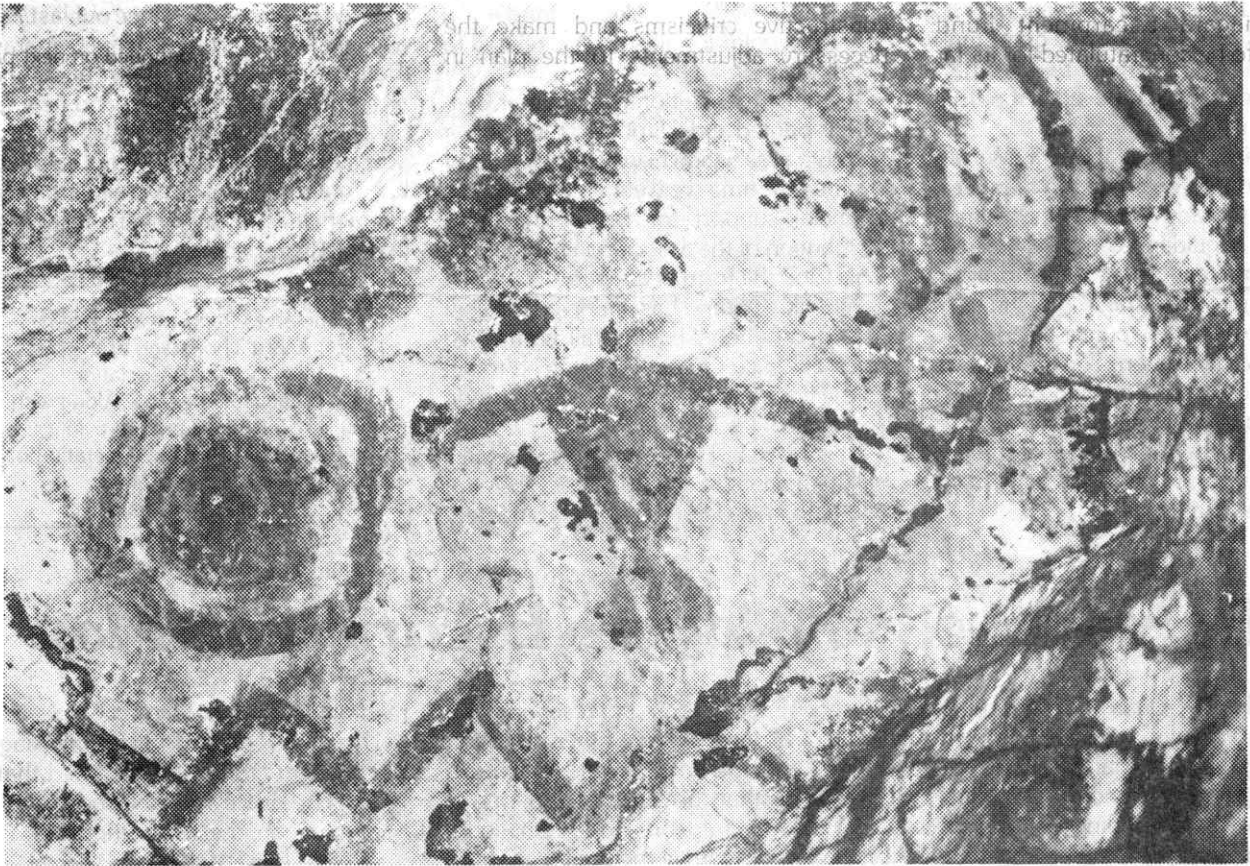
PUBLISHED BY THE VOYAGEUR TRAIL ASSOCIATION, A MEMBER OF F.O.H.T.A.

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

No: 29

EDITOR: STEVE TAYLOR

WINTER 1984/85



## INDIAN PICTOGRAPH...

The Voyageurs may have  
seen these.

Hike Ontario!

# OUTLOOK



Box 422, Cambridge, Ontario, N1R 5V5.

WINTER 1984/85

## Busy year for Hike Ontario

The past year has been a very busy one for Hike Ontario, the new name for the Federation of Ontario Hiking Trail Associations. In my report of a year ago I mentioned that we had applied to the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation for approximately \$14,000 of base grant funding. I am happy to report that we have received the grant and have been putting it to good use.

1) We hired a facilitator, Mr. William Thorsteinson, to examine the manner in which Hike Ontario conducts its business, and help give guidance on where we can improve our effectiveness. As a result, we held a major "think-tank" meeting, on March 31 to clarify the purpose and objectives of our organization. The meeting was well attended, and produced consensus on the following organizational goals:

A) To create hiking as a natural healthful and enjoyable activity for citizens of all ages.

B) To establish a network of high quality trails across the province and connecting with Manitoba and Quebec.

C) To gain public support for hiking.

D) To develop Hike Ontario as a focal point for all activities related to hiking.

2) The organizational newsletter Outlook is printed and distributed through our member association newsletters. Last year for the first time we were able to provide financial support for the printing and distribution of the association newsletters. This took the form of a rebate.

3) Hike Ontario has endorsed the concept of a national hiking trail from coast to coast. Hike Ontario has agreed to act as the sponsoring agency for the Ontario segment of such a trail.

4) The next Hike Ontario conference will be held in Guelph in 1986. Those of you who attended the Hike Ontario con-

ference in Peterborough in 1980 will no doubt look forward to another rewarding get together.

5) Basically, most of our member associations are in healthy shape. I am pleased to report that since our last AGM a revival in the fortunes of the Ganaraska Trail Association has taken place. They are adding both members and new trail.

6) We have applied to the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation for expanded base grant funding to sustain and extend our activities. The ministry response is expected very soon.

The above report was made by Gord Thompson at the Bruce Trail Association annual general meeting. Along with the BTA response printed below, it is reproduced with the co-operation of Norman Day, editor, Bruce Trail News.

## BTA response to Niagara Escarpment Plan

Back in 1967 Leonard Gertler made his first recommendations on preserving the Niagara Escarpment and securing the Bruce Trail for all time. This summer the Hon. Norm Sterling, Provincial Secretary for Resources Development, released his report on the Niagara Escarpment Plan. Initial indications are that the report is supportive of the Bruce Trail, including as it does a \$25,000,000 fund for land acquisition along the Niagara Escarpment. The Bruce Trail Association welcomes the final plan, but, nevertheless does have some reservations. The following is a shortened version of the text of a letter sent by the BTA to the Assistant Clerk of the Executive Council in response to Norm Sterling's request for comments by interested parties.

At the outset, we wish to commend Mr. Sterling and the Government of Ontario on their efforts to retain in this final report the essence of the Bruce Trail and land acquisition policies that have evolved over the past 15 years. In particular, we heartily applaud the establishment of the \$25 million Niagara Escarpment Fund. Cabinet is to be congratulated for its far-

sightedness and its commitment in that regard.

Having rendered this general support for the plan, the association has a number of specific concerns which must be addressed. We sincerely hope that cabinet will respond favorably to the following constructive criticisms and make the necessary adjustments to the plan in

rendering a final decision:

1) In the Proposed Plan for the Niagara Escarpment (1979) it was stated that:

"The Bruce Trail does not appear on the acquisition list. The Trail is assigned a special status, recognizing that it is an essential component of the parks system and that opportunities for acquisition may occur at random. When the opportunity occurs to acquire a section of the Bruce Trail, the acquisition of that section assumes top priority for the allocation of funds."

To our knowledge, there was no

Continued on next page

**BTA** from previous page

evidence submitted during the 1980-82 hearings which found fault with this policy and nothing in the Hearing Officers' report (1983) that specifically identifies this policy as being flawed. As a result, the policy was contained in the NEC's Final Proposed Plan for the Niagara Escarpment (1983) which was submitted to Mr. Sterling.

In the Niagara Escarpment report released on July 31, 1984, however, this longstanding — and apparently quite valid — policy on priority acquisition for the Bruce Trail has evaporated.

**Recommendation:** That Part 3 — "Escarpment Parks and Land Acquisition" of Vol. 1 of the Niagara Escarpment Plan be amended and the above-noted paragraph on priority Bruce Trail acquisition be inserted.

2) In the three drafts of the Niagara Escarpment Plan, the Niagara Escarpment Commission saw fit to illustrate (using red lines) on the maps accompanying

the policy texts those areas to be acquired under the provisions of the plan. Again, we see no evidence from the Hearing Officers' report and know no sound reason why areas of future acquisition were deleted from the maps accompanying the Niagara Escarpment Plan (July/84). In fairness to landowners along the escarpment, we feel that it would be appropriate to show, at least in a generalized way (given the 1:50,000 scale of the maps), the government's land acquisition intentions. Such delineation could be accompanied by a cautionary note in the legend to the effect that the configurations are meant to show the government's general land acquisition intent with respect to the parks system. Precise and final boundaries will be established as a result of detailed negotiations with individual landowners.

**Recommendation:** That all maps accompanying the Niagara Escarpment Plan show those areas identified for future acquisition, and that a qualifying note be given (e.g. in the map legends), on the basis of the above.

3) The Niagara Escarpment Plan

allows for the creation of a committee of five members to administer the Niagara Escarpment Fund.

Given the unfortunate evolution of the membership of the Niagara Escarpment Commission over the years, which saw the representative balance prescribed by the Niagara Escarpment Act gradually eroded away, the Association is concerned that the O.H.F. Niagara Escarpment Committee fully represent the organizations and agencies which are active in acquiring escarpment lands.

**Recommendation:** That the Niagara Escarpment Committee of the Ontario Heritage Foundation be comprised of representatives of the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Conservation Authorities, the Bruce Trail Association and the Nature Conservancy of Canada, and a person representing municipal interests, in addition to the NEC chairman.

We thank you for the opportunity to bring these matters to your attention and we trust Cabinet will agree to make these improvements to what is already an exceptional Plan.

## Volksmarching on the Grand Valley Trail

The International Federation of Popular Sports was founded in Germany in 1968. The objective was to encourage health through outdoor activity. The theme is organized walking (ie. Volksmarching), cycling, canoeing or skiing for Fun, Fitness and Friendship. The emphasis is on encouraging participation by people of all ages. Through a series of medals and awards people are encouraged to start and then to progress to higher achievements, at their own pace, eventually moving to an enjoyment of the activity without the need for awards.

In 1983 Hike Ontario was asked if we could provide a venue for a Volksmarch event in June, 1984. A large group of Volksmarchers were to come to North America to help promote the idea here. The Grand Valley Trail Association agreed to be the host club. On Saturday, June 23rd/84 a small group of Grand Valley Trail Association members guided 110 Volksmarchers from Germany, 20 Volksmarchers from southern Ohio, 2 from Austin, Texas and one from Haileybury, Ontario along the Grand Valley Trail from the Elora Gorge to the covered bridge at West Montrose.

Many of the German Volksmarchers had never walked on a North American style hiking trail and some were initially disturbed about the rough foot-

ing. Nevertheless they demonstrated that they were indeed "walkers". As one vigorous Grand Valley hiker commented, "These people move like they have V-8's and I've got a 4 cylinder engine."

Following their hike the Volksmarchers visited the Concordia Club in Kitchener for refreshments. Although the trail had been tough by their standards they were proud to have met the challenge and they had enjoyed the contact with nature along the way.

When asked if they would like to come back the majority answered yes.

## Fohta Awards

In the past year at least three clubs have presented the FOHTA award (a beautifully designed scroll) to individual members of their respective clubs. The Rideau Trail Association has honoured Ed and Shirley Simpson for several years service in the area of trail and facility maintenance; the Grand Valley Trails Association has honoured Betty Schneider as a founding member, guiding light, and enthusiastic supporter of the Association; and the Guelph Trail Club has presented Jim Pierce with the award for his pioneering work on the Radial Line Trail, his continuing work in maintenance coordination, and his leading of hikes.

Dave Hull - Editor