



VOYAGEUR TRAIL NEWS

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An outing on the RAINBOW Section between Espanola and Whitefish Falls

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Annual General Meeting, Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., Oct. 1, 1976

I am pleased to report that the Voyageur Trail Association continues to make excellent progress, especially in trail planning and construction, and I would like to comment briefly on the progress and activities of the various member clubs or sections.

South Baymouth Section: Our leader at South Baymouth has, unfortunately, resigned, but with a promise to try to organise a group to carry on.

Rainbow Section: A busload of Bruce Trailers and others from southern Ontario came up on the May 24th weekend to help build trail at Espanola. Details are recounted in the September newsletter.

Penewobiking Club: This name, perhaps unfamiliar to some of you, means Blind River in Ojibway. More trail planning has been done by this group. They have more than doubled their membership since last year.

Thessalon Club: Trail clearing is continuing at a steady pace in the Thessalon area. They have taken on an extra 10 miles, because of the lack of an Iron Bridge club, so perhaps they could stand some extra help from other members.

Desbarats Club: This small but active club has virtually completed their section and are having an official opening on Saturday, November 6.

Echo Bay Club: This club is contacting landowners and will be clearing trail this fall.

Saulteaux Club: This club has about 25 miles of trail built and had a series of well-attended hikes this summer.

In summary, if we can complete the Echo Bay Section and the Thessalon Section by the end of next summer, we will have close to 100 miles of continuous trail from Gros Cap to Iron Bridge... To help bring this about, the Voyageur Trail Association has received a grant of \$1,000 from Wintario to purchase tools. Some of these have been purchased or have been donated by Cochrane-Dunlop. These are professional quality tools and should stand up to considerable trail-clearing use. As you probably know, that \$1,000 has to be matched by another \$1,000 from our own funds or private donations. If you can help in any way, it would be greatly appreciated by your board.

This summer I presented a brief to the Ontario Trails Council which met in Sault Ste. Marie, on behalf of the V.T.A. board and membership. It stated our concern for protection of landowners from liability and asked for legislation to define and protect hiking trails from non-compatible use. I also attended my first F.O.H.T.A. meeting this summer and can report that this group is made up of people who are earnestly concerned with the problems of hikers and trail users in Ontario.

Now for three big news items. First, in response to an article in the Sudbury Star, we have found a person willing to help us in Sudbury. He is presently trying to find a group to start a Sudbury Club. Since we have no members between Blind River and Espanola, a Sudbury Club can help immensely by planning and building trail west of Espanola, through the Massey area.

Second, after several years of trying to find someone in Thunder Bay to start a club and begin trail-building towards Sault Ste. Marie, someone has finally stepped forward. He is a former Bruce Trailer and is anxious to form a Thunder Bay Trail Club and begin to build trail eastwards. Also, some of you are already aware that 20 miles of trail was built between Terrace Bay and Schreiber last year. I have been in contact with the initiator of that trail and he is delighted to hear of our activities. That trail will become part of the Voyageur Trail when we can link up to it.

Third, I have also had a discussion with Ministry of Natural Resources people concerned with Lake Superior Park, and it appears that they are in favour of building a shoreline trail to our standards and with the white blazes and yellow markers of the Voyageur Trail. Although it will be built and maintained by M.N.R. staff, they would appreciate some help from our members when trail building starts. I hear also that the Pukaskwa National Park people have about 12 miles of shoreline trail built. It appears from this that it is about time we started to think about moving north.

In closing, I'd like to express my sincere appreciation to all of our members who have worked so hard in so many ways to make the Voyageur Trail the success that it is. I'd especially like to thank your executive, who have carried a heavy load in planning and executing events. Thank you all for your support in this exciting venture.

FEDERATION OF ONTARIO HIKING TRAIL ASSOCIATIONS

This federation (F.O.H.T.A.), of which the V.T.A. is a founding member, was organized in 1973 to assist the numerous hiking trail clubs in the province and to speak as a united voice for them to government and other bodies. It provides a free exchange of ideas and information of mutual benefit.

I was able to attend two meetings in 1976 along with Ralph Wood, your other F.O.H.T.A. representative. F.O.H.T.A. has sponsored Ontario Hiking Day and will sponsor it again on October 2, 1977, a much better time of year for northern trails.

Our problems with the signs on Highway 17 received sympathetic consideration and F.O.H.T.A. will write to the Hon. S. Handleman, Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, expressing their collective concern over this problem.

F.O.H.T.A. will be presenting a brief to the Ontario Trails Council and will be sharing the Bruce Trail booth at the 1977 Sportsman's Show in Toronto. They will display a map showing all hiking trails in the province and brochures of participating clubs. V.T.A. members willing to help staff this display for part of any day between March 18 and 27, please contact Ralph Wood in Toronto (741 3399) soon and let him know of your willingness to help.

F.O.H.T.A. also facilitates an exchange of newsletters between hiking trail clubs and the V.T.A. has been receiving these. More will be said of this in a future newsletter.

On November 27, 1976 I attended a symposium in Toronto, sponsored by F.O.H.T.A. with guest speakers, general discussion and working groups. The symposium was held to bring points of contention between hikers and the government to the attention of the Ontario Trails Council, to present an opportunity for hikers and government people to get to know each other and to work together, and for F.O.H.T.A. members to present a more unified front to the government. I found the meeting to be very productive and enlightening. The results of this symposium will be available to participants and a summary of them will be used in a brief presented to the O.T.C. by F.O.H.T.A. in the new year. I will prepare my own summary and present it to the board of the V.T.A. and it will be available to club members through their representatives.

P.D.Syme
F.O.H.T.A. Representative