



VOYAGEUR TRAIL NEWS

PLEASE RENEW MEMBERSHIP

No. 76 FALL 2000

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ASSOCIATION

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RANDOM THOUGHTS *by Gayle Phillips, VTA President*

The Trans Canada Trail Relay 2000 passed through Sault Ste. Marie on July 22 and 23 and I must say what a grand experience it was! I was involved in organizing the local Relay celebrations which kept me pretty busy, but all in all, it was pure delight. I had opportunities to renew old acquaintances and make some new terrific friends. As the Pacific and Arctic Ocean water bottles were passed hand to hand across the country, each of those who carried it promised to join our country by trail. (Another interesting tidbit...even after all those thousands of miles of travel, the Arctic water is still colder than the Pacific!) The Trans Canada Trail Relay Regional Coordinator for the section from Winnipeg, Manitoba to North Bay, Ontario (among others) was our very own Vice President Central, Mike Landmark. The organization of this huge undertaking was (to say the least) most impressive. Well done, Mike and well done, Trans Canada Trail!



(l to r): Mike Landmark, Gayle Phillips, Monica Hilton, Marge Kelland (all VTA members!)

Speaking of joining our country by trail, Georgena MacDonald continues to find new opportunities for the extension of the Voyageur Trail.

There is a new club in Thessalon (contact Earle Jones 842-3226 email: eaj@sympatico.ca) and an active group from Iron Bridge joining the Penewobikong Club.

In the Thessalon Section, Ontario Rangers and Work Fare groups are assisting in the maintenance of trail between Melwel Road and Highway 129.

Al Wright from the Ontario Trails Council is working on developing a Regional Trails Committee and is looking for volunteers to donate their time and/or ideas. For more information, contact Al at (705) 946-8538 or email to: al.wright@sympatico.ca

The VTA Guidebook Committee under the leadership of Steve Dominy, and with helpful assistance from Don McGorman, are now making plans for the next edition. Plans include GPS readings throughout, improved maps and up-to-date descriptions. Contact Steve at (705) 946-2484 or email to: sdominy@NRCan.gc.ca



Trans Canada Trail Relay 2000 crossing the new multi-use Iron Bridge on Monday, July 24, 2000

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RANDOM THOUGHTS

(Continued from page 1)

Our master proposal writer, Steve Dominy has secured a grant from Canada Trust Friends of the Environment to create a VTA Trail Workers' Guide. Requests for proposals were sent out in mid-April and Kathie Brosemer was hired with an aim of having the guide done by the fall. This guide will include all the information necessary to build trails to VTA standards and copies will be forwarded to all clubs before next year's maintenance season. Anyone wishing to contact Kathie can email to: alderego@madscientist.com or call at (705) 949-3862.

I have been receiving lots of contacts about the Voyageur Trail through our web site. The most unusual was someone inquiring about whether we allow llamas on our trail. Apparently in other parts of the world, llamas are used by outfitters as "pack animals". I passed this message around the executive and we all found out that we know very little about llamas. What do they eat? (We hoped 'maple saplings'!) What sort of terrain can they handle? Can they pass diseases/genes to farm animals? To be on the safe side for now, our answer to llamas on the trail would be 'on Crown land only please' until we can find someone who can authoritatively fill us in! (We would also appreciate hearing from any landowners on this subject.)

Our VTA Membership Secretary, Ron Fournier reported that we had 270 members as of early June. That has to be a record!

Hike Ontario announces that Ontario Hiking Day is Sunday, October 1st this year and that it is part of a province-wide project called "Legacy Trails". Hikes will be planned in all areas of the province. Get the family out and enjoy!

The Saulteaux Club is sad to report that Susan Graham has stepped down as President. The office remains vacant. Susan has graciously offered to help out with ongoing projects until a replacement can be found. Anyone wishing to volunteer to lead our largest club, please contact Susan at (705) 949-4105.

On a happier note, the Coureurs de Bois Club reports a new full executive: Ray Cormier (President), Bill Ralph (Vice-President), Maxine Forsyth (Secretary/Treasurer), Fred Forsyth (Trail Master). They also report their trail has been cleaned from Hwy 108 to Christie Creek.

The Casques Isles Club reports (in June) that their trails are 85% cleaned, some signs will be replaced this year, they are working on areas identified in the trail audit conducted last year, some new active members, a full hiking schedule for the season and that they are looking forward to working in partnership with members from the Nipigon to Red Rock area. In addition, they wanted to thank Rainbow Falls Provincial Park for their ongoing support and the promotional assistance they have received from Schreiber's Parks and Recreation department.



Many people have been inquiring as to which sections of the Voyageur Trail are registered as Trans Canada Trail. Basically, everything that is in the yellow binder, Edition 3.1 of the Voyageur Trail Guidebook is registered, but here is a detailed list:

Nipigon to Red Rock (Nipigon River Recreational Trail 8.2 km),
Rosspoint to Terrace Bay (Casques Isles Club 52.4 km),
Marathon (6.8 km),
Wawa (Michipicoten Club 16.0 km),
Harmony (Harmony Club 5.0 km),
Stokely Creek (11.7 km),
Goulais River (11.0 km),
Sault Ste. Marie (Saulteaux Club 54.5 km--includes Old Goulais Bay Road to Gros Cap section),
Echo Ridges (59.2 km),
Desbarats (21.9 km),
Thessalon (48.6 km),
Iron Bridge (9.2 km),
Blind River (Penewobikong Club 44.1 km) and
Elliot Lake (Coureurs de Bois Club 23.5 km).

This is a grand total of 372.1 km of registered Trans Canada Trail for two out of the five core uses: hiking and skiing.

The Annual Meeting, scheduled to take place on Saturday, October 21 in Elliot Lake (see page 5) will offer something truly special. With all this trail building going on, there has been a cry for lessons to better understand the basics of GPS (Global Positioning System) navigational systems. Dennis Paradine from Sault College has agreed to do a presentation after the Annual Meeting on October 21. (To take an actual college course in how to use a GPS would run you about \$300, so this is a truly once-in-a-lifetime offer! Don't miss out!) Plan to attend our AGM this year.

While you plan some time at the AGM, start thinking about who you would like to see on the Voyageur Trail Association's executive. Both Peter Stinnissen (Vice President West) and Gayle Phillips (President) have announced they will not stand for re-election, and all executive positions have to be filled. There are many talented members out there and lots of support from current and past executive members. If you think you might like to become more involved, you need not think you are alone!

Also at the AGM, the new VTA constitution and by-laws will be unveiled and voted on. Plenty to see and do this year, so don't miss it!



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TREES AND TRAILS by Georgena MacDonald, Trail Coordinator

Our needs are simple enough. A wilderness hiking trail that will take us over hills, across rivers and through the forest. There will always be hills and rivers, but what about the forest? How can we be certain that the hiking trails we develop will be there for a long, long time?

Thanks to sustainable forest management practiced on both Crown and private land, many concerns I may have had about saving hiking trails from the chainsaw have disappeared — well almost. (There is no accounting for the wood thieves.)

Domtar Forest Tour



In June, Mike Thompson, Domtar Forester, led seven VTA hikers on a forest tour in the Tower Lake area of the Echo Ridges Section. Thompson capably fielded a barrage of questions. Thanks to Thompson's down to earth and patient answers, any doubts we may have had about forest management practices under the new Crown Forest Sustainability Act were banished.

Thompson explained that former Forest Management Agreements were converted to Sustainable Forest Licences. The SFL holder can be one single licence holder or a partnership of companies. The licence holder (Clergue Forest Management in the Algoma Forest) is responsible for forest management planning, following MNR rules and renewal work.

Sustainable forest management practices include developing Forest Management Plans that are based on good silvicultural practices, not what the mills need, Thompson noted. Buffer zones along rivers and streams, provision of sufficient habitat for protected species, and considering other forest use values—cultural, heritage, trapping, fishing, hunting and hiking, are all part of management planning.

Planning teams Local Citizens Committee (LCCs) or Resource Management Advisory Committee (RMACs) including MNR staff, trappers, environmentalists, forest industry, First Nations, Economic Development and municipal representatives. The plans are for a twenty year time frame. Public meetings are held and annual reports and independent forest audits are done to assure compliance.

Harmony Forest Tour

In July, I spent a day touring access roads and examining harvest areas with forester George Schmitz in part of the 77,000 acres owned by Harmony Forest Inc in the Batchewana Bay - Montreal River area.

Schmitz has many reasons to be proud of his forest management. The tour commenced on Wolfe Lake Road where the property abuts Stokley Creek property owned by Chuck Peterson. This is just one of the areas where Schmitz crews have cleaned up unofficial garbage dumps.

There are no private property signs on the Harmony Forest lands, no gates, and Schmitz has a good reputation of supporting local community endeavours and working with people.

As the tour progressed, I learned that the forest is recovering from mismanagement of the past. The forests here were "highgraded" for many years for hemlock, pine, maple and birch, yet under Schmitz's management it is difficult to tell that the area has been logged.

I learned that the highly resinous stumps and diseased deadfall from former pine forests resist decay for decades. In a selective maple-birch harvest area, Schmitz noted, deciduous tops left on the forest floor will decompose within three years, leaving a nice clean floor. Schmitz showed me an area just south of Carp Lake logged 10 years ago, now a robust maple and yellow birch forest. The clean shaded under-story looked like a great place for a cool hike.

With Schmitz's help, we will identify appropriate and safe access, parking and loop trails in the harvested areas. The Harmony Forest holdings extend almost to the Montreal River. It took us six hours to travel half of the access roads. I look forward to more backroads exploring—this time with the GPS.

Thanks to both of these foresters. Their genuine commitment to their profession and to the forest will be appreciated by hikers for years to come. Once trails have been mapped and developed, both companies will provide no-cut buffer zones along the trail.

For more information:

- Visit your district MNR office and talk to the forestry staff. Read the forest management plan documents and look at the maps. Ask questions.
- Take a forest tour offered in many northern communities.
- Pick up a copy of "The Working Forest" from your local heavy equipment parts supplier, dealer or service centre.
- **Web Sites of Interest:**
 - http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/cfs/cfs_e.html
 - <http://www.cif-ifc.org/direct.html>
 - <http://www.algomaforest.com/>
 - <http://www.opfa.on.ca/>
 - <http://www.ofia.com/>

