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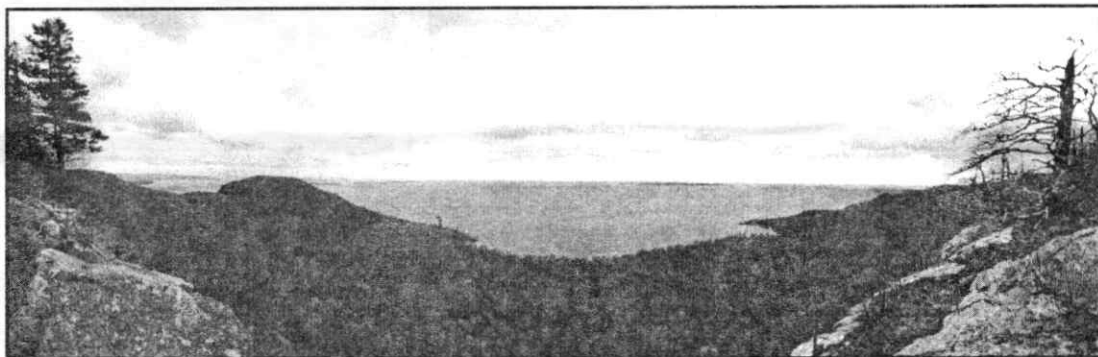
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# VOYAGEUR TRAIL NEWS

EDITOR: Cheryl Landmark

LAYOUT BY: Gayle Phillips

## NORTH vs SOUTH: WHY I'M HEADING FOR THE VOYAGEUR TRAIL! *by Kas Stone*



Coastal Trail panorama at Baldhead, Lake Superior Provincial Park

Sadly, I live in the south. Whenever I get a day off, I like to hike. There are lots of trails to choose from: the Bruce Trail, the Oak Ridges Trail, Lake Ontario's Waterfront Trail, or a trail in one of the local Provincial Parks or Conservation Areas. But there are also several million other people living here, and on sunny Sundays they all seem to pile into their SUVs and head to a trail! If I'm organized and get to the trailhead really early, or if I'm lucky and the weather is lousy, I sometimes don't see too many people – maybe just a dozen or so. But there are other days when it becomes so crowded that I feel like an ant in a marching column.

That's when I think wistfully of the time I have spent hiking on the Voyageur Trail – whole days, just me and my dog, without seeing another soul. I love the solitude. I can move at my own pace without holding up or having to overtake anyone else. I can always find an uncluttered spot to stop to take a photograph or eat a picnic lunch. I don't have to talk or listen politely to anyone. And I can think my thoughts, ponder life's questions, and enjoy the natural surroundings in peace.

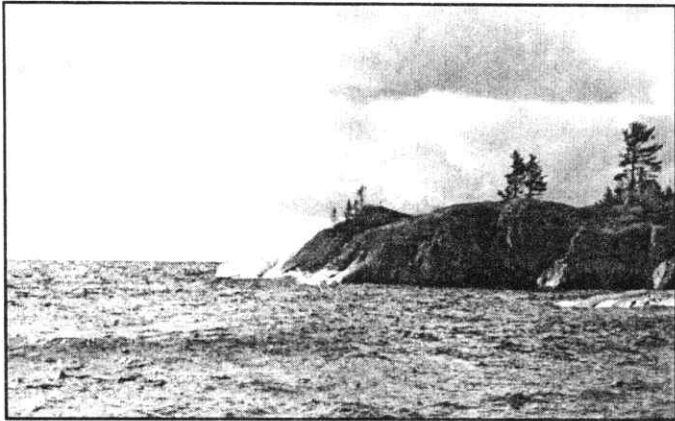
In the south it's hard to find a quiet place. The chatter of other hikers and the squeak of mountain-bike brakes are frequent intruders along the trail. Almost always in the distance can be heard the rumble of traffic on highways and the whistle-blasts of trains on tracks that seem to converge wherever I am. And in the sky above, a succession of enormous jets roar as they take off or land at Pearson International Airport.

The north, of course, is not immune from human noise. That ribbon of TransCanada Highway and its companion, the CP Railway, generate their share. But there are long segments of the Voyageur Trail, especially in Lake Superior Provincial and Pukaskwa National Parks and along the Casques Isles trail, which depart from the highway-railway corridor, leaving its noise behind. Above the trail, the aircraft fly so high that the only evidence of them is a fluffy streak across the sky. And the trail's low density of hikers and its complete impossibility for bikers make on-trail chatter an uncommon, indeed almost a welcome, occurrence. So if one stops to listen, usually the only sound is of wind and waves, punctuated by the cry of birds.

(Continued on page 2)



**NORTH vs SOUTH** (Continued from page 1)



*Sinclair Cove from the Lake Superior Provincial Park Coastal Trail*

Still, in the south we're lucky to have any trails at all. And we are grateful to the local hiking clubs, nature associations and enlightened private property owners for these small, protected spaces. They are tiny swatches of nature in a patchwork landscape that is primarily human in character, tucked in amongst the golf courses, gravel quarries, farms, cottage properties, equestrian stables, suburban estates and industrial parks. How nice it would be if the swatches were bigger and the trails longer. It's difficult to hike for more than two or three hours in the south without going around in circles!

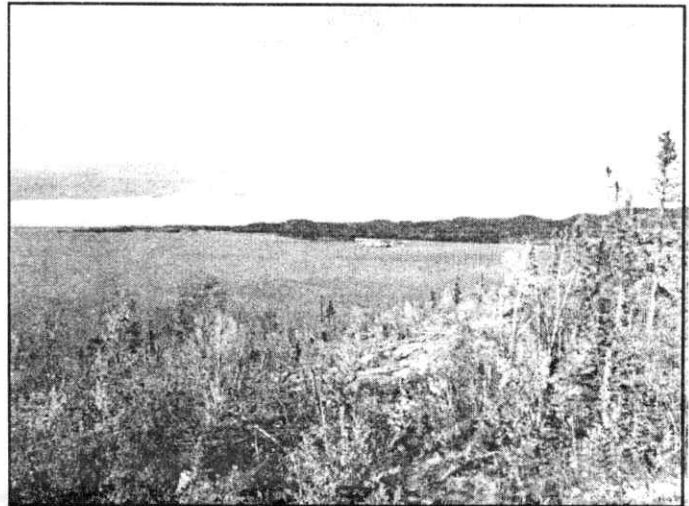
The north, too is very lucky to have its trails. But their presence is not constrained as it is in the south by human sprawl. From cliff-top lookouts or from heights of land like Mount Gwynne, one gets an overwhelming sense of the wild landscape. Man-made intrusions into that landscape – an occasional radio tower, a tiny ribbon of roadway, even the incongruous stack of a pulp-mill – seem utterly insignificant compared with the expansive boreal wilderness and the vastness of Lake Superior. A hike along the Voyageur Trail can be many hours long, days even, without running out of turf.

No, what makes the north fortunate in its trails is the small group of VTA volunteers who build and maintain them. These people give their time and energy every year to clear away deadfall, refresh blazes, put up cairns, build bridges, negotiate new routes and update maps. So that, when frazzled southerners like me escape to the north to hike, the trail is followable – over hundreds of kilometres of relentlessly rugged terrain!

I 'discovered' the Voyageur Trail on my first visit to Lake Superior two years ago. And I am busily packing my gear for another visit – my fourth in those two

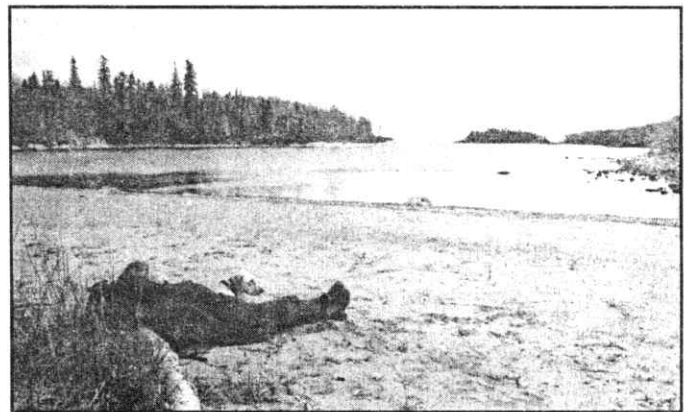


years – to that magnificent trail. I will spend the next two weeks having a wonderful hike. My sincere thanks to the VTA for making it possible!



*Sinclair Cove from the Lake Superior Provincial Park Coastal Trail*

(Below) Kas and "Skye" relax at Kelly's Harbour after a long day on the Casque Isles section of the Voyageur Trail



**Nominate your candidate** for this year's **Steve Taylor Volunteer Award** (to be announced at the Annual General Meeting, see pg 3). Tell us how your nominee has gone 'above and beyond the call of duty' with their volunteer duties in Voyageur Trail initiatives and email to [voyageur.trail@sympatico.ca](mailto:voyageur.trail@sympatico.ca) or mail c/o Gayle Phillips. Entries must be received **before Sat., Sept. 20/03**.



**Trailhead Packages for 3 or more day stays for 2 include:**

- free Algoma map
- services of tourist coordinator
- detailed local travel maps
- password for personal web access to the Great Lakes Explorers Club Secret Tips

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As a hotel guest let us connect you with local individuals and businesses with specialized services such as equipment rentals or guiding services. Each Trailhead package is designed to be as unique as you are to make this a truly memorable vacation!