



No. 94 FALL 2006

EDITOR: Cheryl Landmark

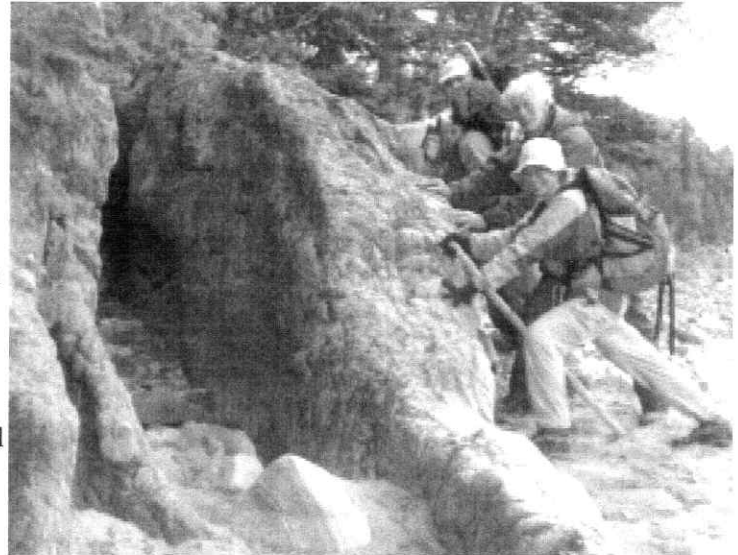
LAYOUT: Gayle Phillips

Published by the
VOYAGEUR TRAIL
ASSOCIATION
PO Box 20040
150 Churchill Blvd
Sault Ste. Marie Ontario
P6A 6W3

HIKING THE COASTAL TRAIL--ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL *by Terry Wright*

Monday, May 22, 2006

Home from a glorious, harrowing, exhilarating hike from Gargantua to Orphan Lake on the Lake Superior Park Coastal Trail. Twenty exhausting kilometres along bush trails, cobblestone beaches, and rocky headlands. And, for the two kayakers, an adrenalin-packed paddle through high winds and choppy waters.



Strength in numbers

Seven of us met at Wendy's Friday evening. We drove two hours north, turning onto a winding, tree-lined road to Gargantua Bay. On the way we saw a large moose standing calmly at the side of the highway, and a yearling by the gravel road.

We set up camp at Gargantua, pulled out maps, discussed operations. Our plan was to take the GPS coordinates from Gargantua to Orphan Lake, describe the trail, and provide the Park with the location of blow-downs on the trail. Our purpose was to collect the coordinates for the revised guidebook, which is featuring a GPS component for the first time.

After a cold night of fitful sleep, we broke camp, launched the kayaks, and began our trek. Steve Dominy, chair of the Guidebook project, took the GPS coordinates, and noted trail conditions on a portable cassette recorder. Patrick Capper cleared the trail. Jim Miller, his son Andrew and I formed the rear guard. Gayle Phillips and Garry Koteles transported tents, food, and whatever else could be stuffed into the kayaks. (Jim, Andrew, and Patrick elected to carry all their equipment and supplies on their backs.)

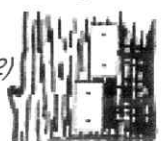
It was the toughest hike I have ever done. For 14 kilometres I fought to keep my balance on bush trails lined with slippery tree roots and muddy rocks, along cobblestone beaches heaped with rocks of every shape, size and colour, and over massive rocky headlands.

We crawled through narrow crevices and slid down moss-covered boulders, We constantly scanned the trail for blue markers or cairns. The trail was not well-marked. Trail markers were often obliterated by blow-downs. Sometimes we got lost, retraced our steps. At one point, just when we expected Patrick and Steve to be well ahead, we were astounded to hear them hailing us from behind. They had lost their way, and found themselves crawling through impossibly small openings under the rocks or making their way over precipitous headlands. They were very relieved to find we hadn't followed the same obstacle course.

Earlier in the day we spotted snowflakes. Late in the afternoon it rained briefly.

Garry jogged back along the trail (he and Gayle got into Beatty Cove at noon) met us, and shouldered my pack. I was light as a bird for the final stretch. By the time we got into Beatty it was about six o'clock. What a welcome sight!

(Continued on page 2)



Toll Free 1-877-393-4003

NEW Web Site at:
www.voyageurtrail.ca
(set your bookmarks)

E-mail:
voyageur.trail@sympatico.ca

The Voyageur Trail Association is a non-profit, volunteer group dedicated to building and maintaining a public hiking trail along the northern shores of Lakes Superior and Huron, from Thunder Bay to South Baymouth on Manitoulin Island.

The VTA is a member of Hike Canada En Marche, Hike Ontario, Ontario Trails Council, and Trans Canada Trail.



INSIDE

Trail News.....3
Revitalization.....4
Outing Schedules.....5
In Honour Of.....6
Tidbits.....7
And much, much more!

Hiking the Coastal Trail *(cont'd from page 1)*



Baldhead River bridge

Gayle and Garry had set up camp, started a fire, defended the campsite against intruders (two-legged). We drank wine, sat on logs around the fire. I heated up my tuna noodle and cheese dish. Garry scorched his smores. We had more wine, discussed life and the afterlife. Then to bed, falling asleep to the sound of the waves crashing against the far shore. During the night Gayle got up to pull the two kayaks to safety. The waves had already reached right up beach, wetting the backs of the kayaks.



Sunday began with heavy cloud cover, choppy grey waters in the bay. We could see our breath in the air. Steve's hot porridge over a good fire warmed us up.

It was 6 kilometres from Beatty Cove to Orphan Lake. Still challenging, but not nearly so rigorous – especially with the aid of a walking stick whittled out by a beaver. But it wasn't until we hiked another 4 kilometres to the parking lot that we heard the rest of the story.



(Clockwise starting in back row on left: Patrick Capper, Garry Koteles, Andrew Miller, Jim Miller, Steve Dominy, Gayle Phillips, Terry Wright)



Gayle met us saying, "There's good news and there's bad news. The good news is we're OK. The bad news is Garry's kayak capsized." As soon as they hit open water they battled fierce winds and high waves. Two hours later they reached the beach at Coldwater, where they planned to land by nicely entering the mouth of the Coldwater River, but there WAS no mouth of the river! All they were greeted with was a solid beach that ended in rocks! By now the waves were 2 metres high. Garry went in first, leaning toward the cresting wave to his right, thinking, "Isn't this great!". Next thing he knew, he found himself in Lake Superior beside his overturned kayak. He wasn't wearing a wet suit. When he grabbed for the kayak, a wave surged forward and flattened him. Somehow he managed to collect the bags bobbing in the waves, get out of the kayak and with a mighty effort, pull it into shore. Gayle, meanwhile, found herself cresting a wave, cutting through and creating a wake of whitewater on each side of the kayak, like a surfer she thought. It was almost an out-of-body experience. She braced the kayak with her paddle and shot into shore. "I never got out of a kayak so quickly in my life!"

After Garry warmed up and changed, they spent the next four hours shuttling the vehicles left at Gargantua and lugging the kayaks and equipment to the vehicles.

We celebrated over beer, bannock, beans, fish, potato soup and grilled cheese sandwiches at the Voyageur Restaurant. *All's well that ends well!*



TRAIL NEWS *by Patrick Capper*

Since retiring I have spent a lot of time on the Voyageur Trail, concentrating on clearing and blazing as necessary trail on which no work had been reported for several years. This was spurred by the plan for a new guidebook, as I thought it would be a pity to have a guidebook with trail that was difficult to follow, I also helped with some GPS work for the new guidebook.

I traveled as far West as the Casque Isles Trail- going out with Duncan MacKay from Schreiber Beach to Aguasabon Falls, and as far East as the Penewobikong Trail north of Lake Dubourne.

I learnt a few things- Andy Penikett pointed out claw marks on some oak trees where bears had climbed up to break off branches to get at the acorns. Duncan MacKay showed me the pictograph at Worthington beach of the Thunder bird- I had not realized how close to the ground pictographs could be. Andy Stevens helped clear and re-establish the Magpie section of the Michipicoten trail. He demonstrated how effective a sharp sandvik can be with a skilled operator cutting through branches up to 4inches diameter.

I have only once been unable to locate the trail (this was several years ago where it paralleled the Bridgehead Road misnamed the Mount Zion Road in the guide book). On this occasion it was easy to re-route the trail onto the road and pick the old trail up again further down the road. However finding the Thessalon trail between highway 129 and Melwel Road proved very challenging for me and other workers (Ila Aho, Steve Dominy, Terry Wright, Don McGorman, Jack Donald, Horst Scheliga), but now we can report it is back into good shape.

Being on the trail from mid September through to the end of November there was little sighting of wildlife, the only mammal being the occasional squirrel. The most birds were sighted were on the Casque Isles trail. It seemed that nearly every day I would see one, or at the most two, Spruce grouse. The most memorable sight were two bald eagles flying over the Garden River while eating lunch at High Dump. The most signs of moose were on the Goulais Section. The most challenging section of trail was the Casque Isles Section, which along with the Marathon section had the most obvious treadway.

Unfortunately in mid November there were some very strong winds so some of the trail cleared before then may have fresh windfalls, however the Echo Ridges section worked on after this only had a few fresh windfalls.

So apart from expecting some fresh windfalls the trail sections left in good shape were: The Casque Isles section from Aguasabon Falls to Schreiber beach (still had some windfalls), The Marathon trail from Carden to Sturdee Cove, The Magpie Section of the Michipicoten trail, the Goulais Section from Kirby's Corner to Old Goulais Bay Road, Echo Ridges Section from the Garden River Bridge to the top end of Echo Lake and from One Horse Lake to Tower Lake, The Thessalon Section from Highway 129 to Melwel Road, The Iron Bridge section and the Penewobikong Section. □□

I would like to thank all the people mentioned for their help and also Garry Koteles, Bob Lamour, Gail Andrew, Judy Falkins, Wayne St John, Susan Graham and my wife Anne who all helped clear trail. On many occasions people were willing to come out despite some very inclement weather. Thanks also the hospitality of Duncan and Elizabeth MacKay, Bob Lamour and Andy Stevens.



VERY LAST CHANCE TO PRE-PURCHASE EDITION 4.0

The new and greatly improved Edition 4.0 of the Voyageur Hiking Trail Guidebook is scheduled for release soon.

Members and non-members can still take advantage of the pre-purchase special offer. You can pre-purchase it at the old price, PLUS have your name put in the draw for a **Garmin eTrex Venture GPS unit** (a \$189.99 value), compliments of **Western Automotive (Sault) Limited**. The draw will take place at the VTA Annual General Meeting in Wawa on October 14th.

The deadline for pre-purchases has been **extended to August 30, 2006**, so don't delay. □

To pre-purchase your 2006 Guidebook, just mail your order and cheque payable to Voyageur Trail Association c/o PO Box 20040, 150 Churchill Blvd., Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 6W3.

Be sure to state that you are pre-purchasing Edition 4.0.

VTA Members \$16.50 + \$8.00 shipping/handling
VTA Non-members: \$25.00 + \$8.00 shipping/handling
(Cdn funds).



LANDOWNERS & MEMBERS IN-GOOD-STANDING: Free advertising in the VT News! Call the Editor, Cheryl Landmark at 1-877-393-4003 or 705-779-3409.

MEMBERS: Don't forget to check your newsletter envelope to see when your membership expires!

