



VOYAGEUR TRAIL NEWS

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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.

If you would prefer us to email you a short message when the VT newsletter is available on our web site, just send an email to: cheryl.landmark@sympatico.ca



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A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE by Cheryl Landmark

(Editor's Note: For those of you who are new to the VTA, and even for those of us who are long-time members, the following excerpts from an article written by Ian Morrison in the Winter 1995 edition of the Voyageur Trail News describes the early years of the Association and will surely bring back good memories for those dedicated, idealistic volunteers who helped to make the VTA what it is today.)

It was on March 26, 1973, that the Commissioner of Parks and Recreation for the City of Sault Ste. Marie, Harold A. Brain, convened a meeting at the Community Services Board Offices, then located in the Sault Memorial Gardens, of "persons interested in establishing a hiking trail along the precipice of the Cambrian Shield" from Gros Cap on Lake Superior to Hiawatha Park, just north of Sault Ste. Marie. One of those in attendance, Dr. Paul D. Syme, a Sault Ste. Marie research scientist and member of the Bruce Trail Association, immediately saw the possibility of extending this concept eastward to Espanola, then south across Manitoulin Island to link up with southern Ontario's Bruce Trail. The other seven persons at the meeting needed little convincing, and an association was born. Over the next several months, the group held informal meetings, recruited new members for the project and busied themselves learning the ABCs of trail building. Over the summer, Paul Syme, the acknowledged leader of the group, visited with officials of the Bruce Trail Association, soliciting advice and guidance. Finally, in the fall, the group met again at the Community Services Board Offices and shared their findings. It was at this meeting, on October 24, 1973, that the name "Voyageur Trail Association" was chosen, and that the decision was taken to follow the Bruce Trail model of dividing the trail (at this point the proposed trail eastward was to be known as the North Channel Trail, and the proposed trail to the north, the Superior Trail) into sections and assigning

responsibility for trail building, maintenance, public hikes, etc. to local Voyageur Trail (VT) Clubs. Donald T. Myren was recruited to form a committee to draft a Constitution for the fledgling association. By the next meeting, held on November 15, 1973 in the library of the Great Lakes Forest Research Centre, Don Myren and Dieter Ropke had a draft Constitution to present and, on the basis of this, an interim Executive was installed (President, Paul Syme; Vice-President, Ralph Yanni; Treasurer, Ralph Wood). Ian Morrison acted as secretary at this meeting and was elected Secretary shortly thereafter.

The first of the Clubs formed under the new Constitution was the Sault Ste. Marie (the name was changed in 1975 to the Saulteaux) VT Club, which was organized in January 1974 (President, Bill Foster; Vice-President, Fr. Arnold Megan; Secretary, Rev. Andreas Kaellgren; Treasurer, Ken Griffiths). The Saulteaux VT Club was followed later that year by the Desbarats VT Club, organized largely through the efforts of Dieter Ropke and, in 1975 by the Penewobikong VT Club, organized through the efforts of Norm Lediett. Another club formed early in the life of the Association was the Thessalon VT Club, organized mainly through the work of Don Fulton. By mid-1978, the Association had grown to ten VT Clubs: Thunder Bay, Schreiber (in 1980, renamed Casque Isles), Michipicoten, Saulteaux, Echo Ridges, Desbarats, Thessalon, Penewobikong, Rainbow and Sudbury.

If the Sault Ste. Marie Section can boast the first club in the Voyageur Trail system, it is the Rainbow Section that can boast the first hikeable trail. George Morrison, a teacher in Espanola, had one of his outdoor classes develop a loop trail in the Espanola area, known as the Rainbow trail. This trail existed prior

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MEMORY LANE

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to the formation of the Association. VTA members from Wawa, Sault Ste. Marie and Thessalon were invited by George Morrison to hike the Rainbow Section one week-end in June 1974. This was the first organized outing of the VTA. This led to further exchanges and a tradition of one VT Club helping another.

The Saulteaux Section was officially opened on September 21, 1975 at a ceremony at Gros Cap, before a crowd of 150 persons. The next section to open was the very scenic Desbarats Section, the official opening of which took place on November 6, 1976, followed by the Thessalon Section (1978) and the Echo Ridges Section. With the opening of the Echo Ridges Section in 1980, the Association could boast a continuous footpath from Gros Cap on Lake Superior to Iron Bridge, as well as significant stretches of hike-able trail in the Casque Isles, Michipicoten, Penewobikong and Rainbow Sections.

The design used by the Association for its trail markers goes back to 1974 when, at a meeting on May 6, resolutions were passed defining the form ("being an arrow pointed upwards surrounded by the words Voyageur Trail") and colour (blue on yellow) of trail markers. The thunderbird logo dates from a year later (1975) and was designed by Janet Clark.

The Voyageur Trail News also has a history dating back to the early years of the Association. During 1973 and 1974, it was customary to circulate copies of the Minutes of meetings to members and other interested parties. This was soon replaced by a newsletter, the Voyageur Trail News, the first issue of which was published on January 15, 1975. The VT News has been published regularly ever since. The first Editor was Ken Griffiths, who remained in that post until 1978, when he was succeeded by Mary-Ellen McCallum.

The first President of the Association, Paul D. Syme, was wont to remark on the satisfaction that comes from being part of an idea that is greater than one's self. The Voyageur Trail is just such an idea. Members past and present have developed and maintained a major hiking trail through some of the most rugged, yet scenic, topography in eastern Canada—a remarkable accomplishment for an organization, the membership of which has probably never exceeded 250.



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LANDOWNERS THANK US (AND WE THANK THEM!)

by Mike Landmark

In the previous edition of the Voyageur Trail News, a letter was sent to the landowners who have allowed us access to their property for our trail systems. I'm pleased to say we received some very positive responses from many of them, who told us they are happy to have their property used by hikers who appreciate the great outdoors and respect the land they are hiking on. Without the landowners' support of the VTA's endeavours, our trail system would not be the great hiking experience it is. Many thanks, once again, to all of those people who have granted us permission to enjoy their land as much as they do.



OUR SYMPATHIES

We regret to announce the passing of the husband of Joanne Marck, President of the Penewobikong Club. The VTA expresses its sincerest condolences to Joanne and her family.



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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Margaret Berlinguette
 Carole Blaquiere
 Norman Bottomley
 Dirk Coetsee
 Leigh Colpitts
 Jakob Cornelis
 Carol Curtis
 Bill Dickson
 Pat Dickson
 Brenda Disisto
 Peter Dobbs
 Howard Dupuis
 Ted Edgar
 Judy Ellyson
 Nancy Ferguson
 Robert Fleming
 Brendon Fletcher
 Carol Friesman
 Lionel Frigault
 Brenda Gooding
 Doris Hannigan
 Kathy Holt
 Dennis Jones
 Chris Kuntz
 Glen Labrash
 J.C. Lediett
 Edna Lim
 Patricia Maenpaa
 Gerald Maenpaa
 Patty Manchester
 Peter Meligrana
 Janice Miller
 Trina Mount
 Bruce Munsie

Michael Myles
 Anitta Niessen
 Janet Norman
 Don Norman
 Katie Pearson
 Shirley Perkins
 Ron Prickett
 Sandy Reineck
 Chris Reineck
 Peggy Robb
 Joe Robinet
 Jeff Robinson
 Sheila Shannon
 Tom Shannon
 John Skinner
 Allister Smith
 Carol Stegink
 Judy Thrasher
 Delio Tortosa
 Warren Townsend
 Donna Townsend
 Mike Townsend
 Debora Trumble
 Mike Trumble
 Lisa Venier
 Shawn Warn
 Andrew Weigel
 Susan Weigel
 Mike Wilmers
 Emily Windle
 Al Wright
 Chris Wright
 Valerie Wright

We hope to see you *on the trail!*



PIERRE SNOWSHOES?!

Someone caught our little mascot, Pierre the Bear snowshoeing his way on the Voyageur Trail! I'll bet he'll have many stories to tell...



FILLING OUT THE FORMS

by Mike Landmark

All participants in Voyageur Trail Association activities are asked to sign an Assumption of Risk Agreement before actively participating in the outing.

This form serves several purposes, not only as a waiver for the participants, but also as a source of useful information and statistics for the VTA.

For instance, there is an age category section, which can assist the VTA and the local clubs in determining what age groups are attracted to what kind of outing. We encourage all participants to fill out this section. We don't need your birth date, just a ball-park estimate of age for statistical purposes.

As well, all outing leaders are asked to provide accurate information regarding the date of the outing, the location of the outing, the nature of the activity (i.e. hike, snowshoe, trail maintenance, etc.), the name of the leader and the sweep, the condition of the trail and the recording of any incidents that may have happened or came close to happening. The reporting of trail conditions is important as a source of information to update our website for each trail section, as well as assisting in planning trail maintenance parties and outings.

The information on the Assumption of Risk form is not only helpful for collecting data, it could also come in handy if Search and Rescue ever needs to be called in to find a lost hiker (we hope this never happens, but it's better to be prepared if it ever does).

These sheets are also used for entering names into draws at the end of each year for free memberships for those who lead and sweep outings and those who serve on trail maintenance parties. Therefore, it is important that outing leaders submit these forms to the VTA on a timely basis.

Membership forms are another valuable source of information for the VTA and its members. Please ensure that all information is accurate and complete when submitting to the Membership Secretary and, if anything changes after you renew or join, please also let the VTA know so that our records remain as up-to-date as possible.

If you are purchasing a "Family" membership, please supply the first names of all your family members so they can get their own VTA Membership Card.

This information is used strictly for the operation of the VTA and its projects and is not shared with any other organizations.

