



VOYAGEUR TRAIL NEWS

PUBLISHED BY THE VOYAGEUR TRAIL ASSOCIATION

BOX 66, SAULT STE. MARIE, ONTARIO P6A 5L2

NUMBER 9

1977-12-15

EDITOR: DR. K. J. GRIFFITHS

ERNIE PRINGLE

This picture could have been taken anywhere on the trail because Ernie Pringle has blazed and cut trail along the whole route.



PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

V.T.A. Annual General Meeting, 1977

I'd like to talk to you tonight about our progress, where we stand and where we are going, as I see it. I'll not speak about the details of each club's progress - that was covered in our last Newsletter and little has been done since then, but I would like to express my and your executive's satisfaction and pleasure with the formation of 4 new clubs in the past year. Actually, one was merely a formalization but the other 3 extend our influence over most of the entire geographic area we hope to see the Voyageur Trail eventually cover. These are the Thunder Bay, Michipicoten, at Wawa, and Sudbury Clubs. All are small at this time but with a nucleus of enthusiastic members and anxious to grow.

The excellent progress of our other clubs as outlined in our last Newsletter is heartening, and they are all to be congratulated. I only wish that local membership could be increased more quickly when it is needed most.

A year ago I made note of our expected 100 miles of continuous trail and it was mentioned again in our recent Newsletter. I truly believe that that accomplishment will not only give us greater publicity and public credibility and support, but will act as a real stimulus to all of us. With new clubs at Wawa and Thunder Bay, and activity beginning in Lake Superior Provincial and Pukaskwa National Parks, we must soon turn our efforts towards the north shore of Lake Superior. Let us finish off this leg of significant length first though, to gain those benefits. It is within our grasp.

Another facet of trail development has arisen now that we have some sections of usable trail. This is not so pleasant and if we look to the south of us we can see its results. Trail misuse in the south is a serious problem and such things as litter, broken fences, opened gates, inconsiderate parking, etc., have forced the rerouting of many sections of trails. The use of the northern rugged section of the Bruce Trail by inexperienced, ill-equipped hikers has led to a brief of protest by the O.P.P. on their own behalf and on that of the O.M.N.R. This details the large number of people who get lost or otherwise come to grief on that section of the Trail, through lack of experience and being improperly equipped. It proposes more education of would-be trail users and the general public.

Fortunately, we have not experienced this activity yet. Indeed, I have received several compliments on the condition and neatness of our Voyageur Trail, the lack of litter and the courtesy of the users. However, with increasing use, the risk rises. Let us head off the problems before they befall us. Be a conscientious hiker and rectify the mistakes of others. Carry out the litter that you might find. If you find garbage dumped on or by the trail, report it to your local club. Above all, we must get into a publicity campaign that is ever on-going, to educate all potential users of the Voyageur Trail in

Trail etiquette. I would urge you all, when you talk to your friends about the Voyageur Trail, to stress courtesy on the trail. I would also solicit your suggestions of groups that might be amenable to a slide talk about the Voyageur Trail and its proper use. Remember - the Voyageur Trail belongs to our landowners and we owe them the respect that we would expect from visitors to our own houses.

I'd like also to make a comment on our growth. We ended our last membership year by topping 200, almost doubling that of a year ago. Of course, we cannot hope to grow exponentially forever, but we've had a good start and with effort on your part, we can continue to grow. Members are our greatest asset and our greatest need. This is not the time to be complacent - to rest on our laurels. There is much more to be done. A completed Section is something to be proud of to be sure, but a Section alone or several of them do not make the Voyageur Trail as we envisage it. It will take many sections, joined end to end, to make the Voyageur Trail complete. So, talk up the vision, the potential, with your friends and associates. Get them to join in a venture that you, as shown by your presence here, must find challenging, fulfilling and enjoyable.

Lastly, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to all of the dedicated workers in this Association and especially those who put out that extra effort. I'll not name names, there are too many and I'm sure to miss someone. but you know who they are, at least within your own club, and they know who they are. We all owe them an extra vote of thanks and they can be proud of their contributions.

It's been another good year of progress, but there is a lot to do yet and we can do it. Let's forge ahead and get it done by helping each other in the common cause of the Voyageur Trail.

Thank you,
Paul Syme

V.T.A. LANDOWNERS - TAKE NOTE

The final report of the Ontario Trails Council has been placed in the hands of the Minister of Natural Resources and among the many recommendations it makes about trails of all kinds, one stands out above all others. The Council found that concern for landowner's liability was of prime importance, both to trail groups and, of course, to landowners, who graciously grant permission for trails to cross their land. The Council has recommended that the Government of Ontario should enact legislation respecting occupier's liability immediately, and presents a model for such legislation as Appendix 2 in the Report. It is our understanding that the Government is already looking into this and it is hoped that we will soon see some legislation in Ontario that relieves our landowners of civil liability.