



COLPOYS BAY - FALL 2022

# THE RATTLER

The newsletter of the 

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Bruce Trail  
CONSERVANCY  

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PENINSULA CLUB

2022 #3



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*Tamara Wilson*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### A Tale of Local Abundance is Not the Whole Story

A boisterous group of 20 evening grosbeaks carouse across the tree canopy at Devil's Monument. The birds continue their journey in the direction of the Bruce Trail Conservancy's (BTC) conservation areas of Cape Chin Woods and Otter Lake. They will likely find a safe route on their journey down the Peninsula: no high-rises, a continuous corridor of trees, autumn berries and seeds to eat, and fresh water along the way.

But what of the group's journey beyond? The flock represents one of 70 "Tipping Point" species - birds that could be the next ones to face threatened or endangered status. According to data reported by the [North American Bird Conservation Initiative \(NABCI\)](#), Tipping Point species have lost more than two-thirds of their population in the last 50 years. In the case of the evening grosbeaks, their

numbers have declined by 90 per cent since 1970. Scientists are not sure as to the reason, but the grosbeaks are part of a larger group of eastern forest birds, including Peninsula regulars like the American woodcock, wood thrush and brown thrasher, all of which have experienced a startling reduction in numbers.

Over the past year, the BTC has established 14 more protected natural areas equating to 1039 acres along the trail's entire route. On the Peninsula, Colpoy's Bay East Nature Reserve, Stoney Birch Nature Reserve, and Dolostone Arch Nature Reserve, 430 acres in total, were established as conservation areas this past year. The addition of this protected land promises long term benefits for wildlife, people, and entire ecosystems. (See Tipping Point or Biodiversity Rebounding)

Tamara Wilson





# THE RATTLER



Bruce Trail  
CONSERVANCY  
PENINSULA CLUB

2022, ISSUE 3

PENINSULA BRUCE TRAIL CLUB  
PO BOX 1096  
LIONS HEAD, ON N0H 1W0  
[WWW.PBTC.CA](http://WWW.PBTC.CA)  
PBTCTHERATTLER@GMAIL.COM  
PUBLICATION AGREEMENT #40555516

## ARTICLE SUBMISSION

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If you have a story that might be of interest to Rattler readers, please send it to [pbtctherattler@gmail.com](mailto:pbtctherattler@gmail.com).

Deadline for submissions for the next edition is March 7, 2023

Editors: Shanna Reid & Laurie Chan  
Layout: Leslie McBeth

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## SAUGEEN (BRUCE) PENINSULA LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*We acknowledge the Traditional Territory of the Anishinabek Nation: The People of the Three Fires known as Ojibway, Odawa, and Pottawatomie Nations. And further give thanks to the Chippewas of Saugeen, and the Chippewas of Nawash, now known as the Saugeen Ojibway Nation, as the traditional keepers of this land.*

## THANK YOU, JAN!

*The editors of the Rattler wish to thank Jan MacKie for her tremendous contributions to the newsletter as layout editor for the past 10 years. She was a pleasure to work with as part of the Rattler team. Her dedication, creative spirit and artful eye helped to give visual form to the news and stories that were published. Jan has many of her own stories to share, and two of them appear in this issue. We hope that she continues to inform and entertain Rattler readers with her writing.*



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*The new staircase will ensure a safer route along this challenging section of main trail that was created with the purchase of the Barrow Bay Cliffs Nature Reserve*

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## Staircase to Heaven – Construction of the Barrow Bay Staircase

**BY DOUG HILL WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM TOM HALL AND THE RATTLER EDITORS**

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The new Barrow Bay staircase was completed this fall and there is now a clear trail from Rush Cove to Barrow Bay. This is the second staircase to have been built on this section of the Bruce Trail, and to appreciate the full picture and the full complexity of this project, we must take you back a few years.

Fifty-five years ago when the Bruce Trail was opened, the main trail followed the shore line from the bottom of the hill at Rush Cove through to the end of the Barrow Bay South Road.

Eventually the land owners at either end of the Rush Cove to Barrow Bay corridor denied access and the trail was rerouted to Scenic Caves Road and County Road 9. This was the case for decades until May of 2020 when the first set of stairs (at the west end of the trail between Rush Cove & Barrow Bay - see map below) was constructed. This was a great feat in itself, and you can read about it here in the Rattler ([Issue #2 2020](#))



Many people have shared the vision of returning the main trail to the optimal route between Barrow Bay and Rush Cove. Achievement of this vision has required a slow and deliberate process of purchasing the necessary properties and creating side trails which would eventually link all the pieces together.

The second Barrow Bay staircase team was focused and each of its groups had a specific function: getting approval; engineering accommodation; material coordination and ordering; and site approval. The hard job of actually building the staircase would come after all this behind-the-scenes work. For this project, we were able to draw from the earlier experience of the first Barrow Bay staircase construction.

The site visit and field drawings needed to be completed early to determine the best locations to build the platforms without having to excavate.



Measurements were made to estimate the size of each platform and construction drawings were created using the information gleaned from the site visit.

Tamara Wilson, president of the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club, and team volunteers Lloyd Hayward and Doug Hill met with engineers from GM Blue Plan (an engineering consulting firm) to review the drawings and get the approval required by the Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula. From the engineered drawings a material list was determined and the materials were ordered and moved to the drop site.





This is where it got interesting.

The location was remote and inaccessible so the project needed some creative thinking. How about a boat? This would be the best solution for a large material delivery, but would necessitate the need for boat captains, a barge (actually, a dock!), chest-wader volunteers, and haulers.

It wasn't easy. According to volunteer (and PBTC trail maintenance coordinator) Tom Hall: "The Barrow Bay staircase project proved to be a harder go than anticipated. The logistics of the build was quite intriguing as we had to transport lumber, tools and other equipment by boat, and picking the right day when the winds were favourable was key."

Volunteer Doug Hill, who played a key role in designing and building the staircase, felt that "the biggest challenge

during the construction was finding a solid footing to support the various platforms." Regarding the task of hauling materials to the site, Hill said: "The steepness and slipperiness of the incline posed a challenge of hauling heavy timbers up the escarpment and operating power tools in a remote location."

Volunteer Tim Wilson also commented on the difficulties of moving materials: "I found it physically demanding ... slippery rocky slopes, lugging materials up the hill and climbing under and over everything to get to the location, sometimes in rather contorted poses. Add that to an almost 1 km hike in and out and you have an exhausting but satisfying day of volunteering."

One generous landowner, however, made moving materials a little bit easier; he gave permission for the construction crew to use his laneway and to build a temporary access trail, for which the Barrow Bay staircase team was very grateful.





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*The vision to rejoin Rush Cove and Barrow Bay along the optimal route is now realized. Thanks to many hard-working volunteers, the Barrow Bay staircase is now a reality. Every step of the way – site surveying, designing, obtaining engineering approval, logistics, boating, trail-clearing, and building – it was Peninsula Bruce Trail Club volunteers who once again stepped forward to help preserve a ribbon of wilderness for everyone, forever.*

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# Sit Awhile

## RECOGNITION OF AN OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER GRANT EHRHARDT



On Oct. 31, 2022, a group of committed volunteers, lead by PBTC Director, Lloyd Hayward, installed a commemorative bench on the Bruce trail near Barrow Bay. The bench overlooks Little Lake and Barrow Bay, and is located approximately 1.3 kilometres in from the parking area on County Rd. 9, south of Lion's Head. This bench was placed in recognition of Grant Ehrhardt's 18-plus years of service as a board member and volunteer with the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club. Over the years, Grant held various positions including trail development director, sales director, land stewardship director, and director-at-large.

The brass commemorative plaque on the bench has a QR code that will take you to

the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club (PBTC) website detailing Grant's contributions. The page can also be found [here](#).

The bench was so heavy, it was disassembled and carried into the site in pieces by volunteers. Each board is composed of a composite material and weighs over 30 pounds (the assembled bench is over 200 pounds). Once at the site, the frame was bolted to the rock with anchors and the boards reinstalled, completing the bench which will remain a lasting tribute to an incredible volunteer. For more information on Grant, see this month's "From the Archives - A Dedicated Trail Builder."



## A Dedicated Trail Builder

BY RUSSELL AND KATHARINE FERGUSON

After a most pleasant and interesting afternoon chatting with Grant Ehrhardt we were left with the conviction [sic] that somehow -- and so often as we've discovered -- the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club manages to land squarely on its feet when prospecting for and choosing just the right person to head up any new development, or take over an already existing job when the need arises.

Such was the case with Grant Ehrhardt. For thirty-three years he had been a high school teacher primarily of Geography in the Fort Erie area. For many years in the 70's to mid 80's Grant had taken his grade 11 Environmental Geography classes to the Peninsula, backpacking, exploring and camping. He did the same with his wife Laine and their family. By the time they were ready to retire the Bruce Peninsula had become the inevitable choice and they bought property in Pleasant Harbour together with a family friend. While building it was destined that they should reconnoitre and discover any old trails in their immediate region and beyond and build snow trails in the surrounding area.

They all moved up in May 2000 and Grant reckons his apprenticeship in trail building had already begun by the time he met up, formally, with the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club. A year into his new life, Grant was invited to join the Peninsula Club as a Director at Large having already met up informally with such active members as Donna Baker and John Appleton. His love of map-making got him involved in helping to create a new 8-map format for the Day Hike Guide and it wasn't long

## FROM THE ARCHIVES



*Grant Ehrhardt's contributions to the Club were recognized in The Rattler 10 years ago. Here is the article...*

before Grant was asked to take over trail development duties to lighten John Appleton's load as Trail Director. This was right up Grant's alley, not only keeping in mind his enthusiastic apprenticeship as he worked on his house and explored the trails that crisscrossed that area, but also as a result of having learnt much about trail building under the expert guidance of Chris Walker and Ross McLean as well as benefiting from the support and encouragement of John himself.

At this point in our narrative, we can't do better than quote some of Grant's own writing about his love of trail building:

"The most enjoyable aspects of trail development, by far (for me), would be the scouting and planning of routes, often on lands where no previous trail existed. Here one's creative instincts can be unleashed: to incorporate ... diverse features ...lookouts, boulders, caves, ridges, stream crossings, wetlands, various ferns and flora; using natural corridors as much as possible, turning and weaving through mature stands of trees; avoiding areas that are sensitive to erosion or with rare plant species; providing as safe



a treadway as possible. Clearing... construction ... final clean-up are a collaborative effort ... by a crew you have assembled, instructed and led. You can sense it when the volunteers are enjoying the social interaction ... physical demands ... satisfaction of building a new trail, and you feel a genuine desire to express your appreciation for their efforts."

"...after completion ... I greatly enjoyed ... blazing, installing signage ... final visit ... to be sure the route is ready for the upcoming inaugural hike ... like sprucing up your home ...for an open house visit by friends and neighbours ... eager to have them like it. It is then that I would experience an almost uncontrollable urge to make it my own section of trail, the sense of 'ownership' is so strong. Finally the day comes when the route is indeed opened ... no longer yours to nurture and coddle ... Perhaps a year or two later ... when revisiting ...it is like a reunion with an old friend; so many memories ... I can't help but smile."

It seems criminal to shorten this lovely little piece but it is in the interest of including something else of Grant's; first, some reflections of his own from his PBTC biography, and second, from a piece he contributed to a special section in previous issue of the Owen Sound Sun Times.

"It still amazes me how the early builders ever opened up the Peninsula in the 1960's. Today we are merely 'tweaking' the corridors created by them and will add a section on the optimum route whenever it becomes possible through land acquisition or handshake permit. I would have to admit that the PBT has become (by my own choice) a rather 'consuming' part of my life, but when I really consider it, I wouldn't have it any other way. There are two important projects I hope to be part of before stepping down; the optimum route to link Rush Cove to Barrow Bay, thereby eliminating some nine km of road walking; and hopefully a return of the Trail in the Cabot Head area.



"We try to represent that portion of the population which not only values our natural treasures, but is committed to promoting their appreciation by means of providing places where people can access these gifts of nature ... by way of foot ... walking, hiking, snowshoeing or cross-country skiing. For this is how our First Nations and our pioneer ancestors experienced these lands which we now seek to save for our children. This is how the men and women first visualized and then worked tirelessly to create the Bruce Trail over 40 years ago, wanted it to be -- and their quest can be completed with our help."

In 2011, after sensing from physical limitations that it was time, Grant relinquished the role of Trail Development Director to the capable hands of Laurence Acland. Now assuming the role of Land Stewardship under the guidance of Don McIlraith, Grant hopes to continue volunteering with PBTC and enjoying the trails for years to come.

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*The Bruce Trail Conservancy's actions can provide long-term adaptation options for nature under threat.*

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## The Tipping Point or Biodiversity Rebounding

**BY TAMARA WILSON**  
PBTC PRESIDENT

When BTC ecologists talk of flushing dozens of bobolinks from the fields at Maple Cross Nature Reserve at Cape Chin while performing their reviews, their observations belie the larger story of the decline of the bobolink, eastern meadowlark, grasshopper sparrow, and other Peninsula grassland visitors.

Grassland species have experienced a 34 per cent decline over the last 50 years.



RATTLESNAKE BABIES - BIODIVERSITY AT ITS BEST

Similarly, though one might have regular glimpses of bears along Dyers Bay, this is a genetically unique species on the edge, due to its isolation on the Peninsula.

Or consider an encounter with a Massasauga rattlesnake and her brood of four babies, basking in the sun - here is a species considered "threatened" and likely to become endangered if steps are not taken to address factors threatening it. No lack of snakes here, however! Zooming out, though, there is a different story unfolding.

Birds are highly responsive to conservation efforts and are good indicators of biodiversity renewal that benefits all manner of plants, mammals, amphibians, insects, and fish. Forty years of wetland conservation initiatives have demonstrated impressive returns of waterfowl populations. Programs to



bring back birds play a role in achieving goals for broader biodiversity protection, climate resilience, and benefits to humans through enhanced physical and mental health opportunities.

Bruce Trail Conservancy’s efforts towards ecosystem and habitat rehabilitation through planting trees, restoring grasslands with native varieties, and propagating endangered plant species, promote biodiversity in habitat and food offerings. These actions can provide long-term adaptation options for nature under threat. According to the Audubon Natural Climate Solutions Report, protecting and managing priority bird and animal habitats will keep more than 100 billion tons of carbon out of the atmosphere. By helping nature, we help ourselves.

Appreciation of the Peninsula as a microcosm of abundance, where we can witness a sliver of one reality where at-risk species flourish, is a privileged, unique perspective. Surrounded by this profusion of life, we could be lulled into complacency. It is, however, imperative that we settle in to tell the long story – one of many years, where we retain our



OTTER LAKE NATURE RESERVE

passion to protect and enhance ecosystems along with their connecting corridors such that plants, mammals, amphibians, insects, and fish find safe and welcoming places to thrive for decades to come.

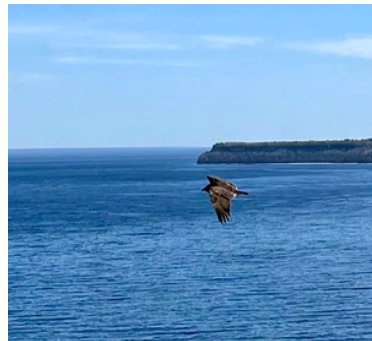
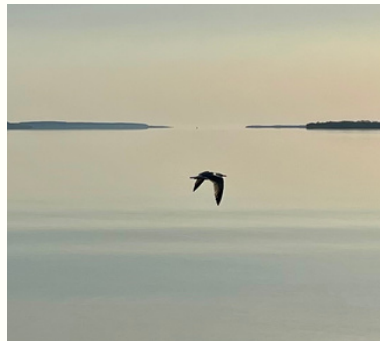
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J. Tannahill



## So You Want to Earn a Birder Badge?

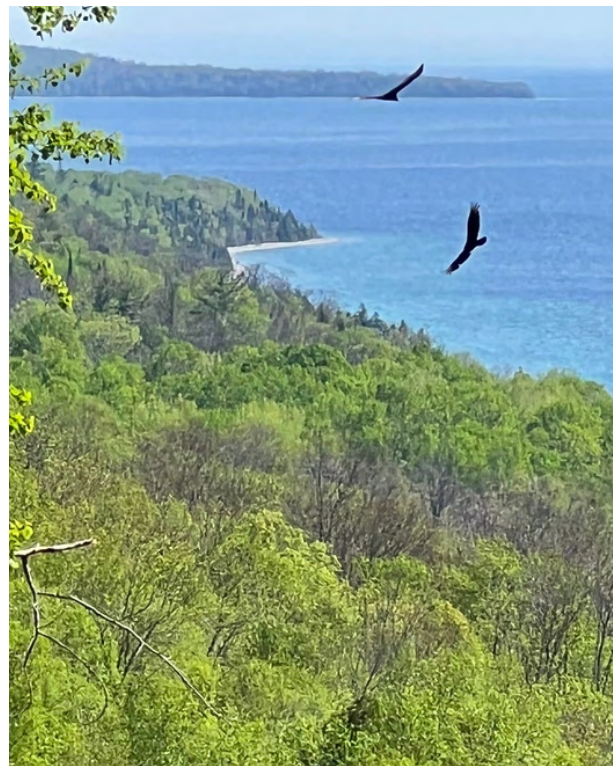
**BY RUTH MOFFATT**  
HIKE LEADER

One hundred birds? At first I was doubtful, but that changed earlier this year when several of us were introduced to Merlin Bird ID. This app, downloaded to your cell phone, will help you to earn a Peninsula Bruce Trail 100 Birder badge (as well as the Ultra and Elite Birder badges, depending on how much time you have).

While hiking a Peninsula section end-to-end in May 2022, Sandy, one of the hikers in our group, said the Merlin app could help us with the bird count. This free app was developed by Cornell University and it is amazing.

With Sandy's guidance, three of us downloaded the app while a couple of others kept watch for photo opportunities. Imagine 11 hikers heading down the trail, three of them with their arms stretched out, recording every sound on their phones using the Merlin app. Often, we had to hike at the back of the pack as it does indeed record all sounds including conversation. A quiet hike is ideal for this activity - it sharpens your listening skills, too.

As soon as Merlin detects a bird song, it searches its database for a match. The app is so smart, it will alert you if the bird is rare for the area you are in. You can research it and determine if indeed it should or should not be on your list. The other thing is that all birds count. We heard a rooster one day, crowing his heart out, so even though we did not see it, it still counted toward our "100" since the rooster crow was unmistakable and the rooster is a bird.



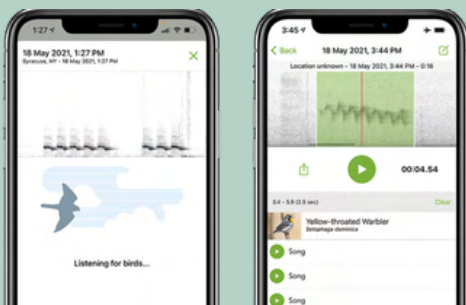
You can also compare any birds Merlin picks up to the [list of birds in Ontario](#).

Since migrating birds do not like to fly over water, they follow the Niagara Escarpment, and since the Peninsula Bruce Trail follows this ribbon of wilderness, it is an ideal spot to go birding. The best time to listen and see these birds is in May and June. You may also want to check out the [Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory](#) while you are visiting, as birds observed or heard there also count toward your birder badge. A TVO short documentary about their important work can be viewed [here](#).

You are also required to submit five photos with your request for a badge. Bird photography is an art, and can be difficult if all you have at your disposal is a cell phone. Still, we were able to take a few photos to submit. Can you spot the fake among the photos on the previous page?

## MERLIN BIRDING APP

- [DOWNLOAD](#)
- [TUTORIAL](#)





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*It brings awareness of our bird population and is a great introduction to ornithology and bird watching. Plus, it's fun!*

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After this end-to-end hike, I was able to complete another one, allowing me to add another 34 birds to my list (I do love hiking this section). So keep checking the Bruce Trail hike schedule, as I hope to lead a couple more end-to-ends in the spring of 2023. Bring your cell phone with its Merlin app if you have one, but if not, that's OK - you're still welcome to join.

Special thanks to the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club for introducing these badges. While the challenge may seem daunting at first, it isn't really that difficult if you take the time to prepare using these tools. The other bonus is that it brings awareness of our bird population and is a great introduction to ornithology and bird watching. Plus, it's fun!

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## Peninsula Blue Series

In September, the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club launched a series of 26 hikes called the Peninsula Blue series. This series covers all side trails on the Peninsula section of the Bruce Trail, giving hikers a chance to learn about the peninsula's diverse geological formations and biodiversity.

The hikes, which are led by certified hikers, are between five and 11 kilometres long, so there is something for everyone.

To register for any of the remaining hikes in the series, go to the hike schedule at <https://hikes.brucetrail.org>.





Bruce Trail  
CONSERVANCY  
PENINSULA CLUB

# UPCOMING HIKES

Join us this winter for some easy hikes and more 'Peninsula Blue Series' hikes and enjoy the winter wonderland in the Saugeen Bruce Peninsula



**12/03** EASY HIKE AT  
CAPE CHIN (BLUE SERIES)

**12/04** GET IN THE SPIRIT  
HIKE WIARTON

**12/04** INTRO TO SNOWSHOE &  
X-COUNTRY SKI EVENT

**12/05** EASY MONDAY HIKES  
HORSESHOE LAKE

**12/12** EASY MONDAY HIKES  
CAPE HURD ALVAR BAY

**12/18** HOPENESS, JACK POSTE  
& DON IRISH SIDE TRAILS

**12/19** EASY MONDAY HIKES  
NORTHERN CAIRN

**12/26** THREE LAKES – CYPRUS,  
MAR AND HORSE LAKE

**01/08** BURNT POINT &  
MERMAID'S COVE TRAILS

**02/03** ORIENTATION TO  
CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING

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<http://www.pbtc.ca/hikes>

FOR MORE INFO CONTACT [PBTC.HIKES@GMAIL.COM](mailto:PBTC.HIKES@GMAIL.COM)



# Peninsula Section End-to-End 2022



The Peninsula section end-to-end hikers reached the Tobermory cairn on September 11. Thanks to Marg Glendon and Tamara Wilson for arranging a celebration at the finish, and to all of the other supporters who came out to cheer on the hikers. And thanks to the volunteers who made the hike possible.

Congratulations to all of the hikers and especially to Margaret Corner, Aneta Maciejewski and Wesley Skoczen, who marked the completion of an end-to-end hike of the entire Bruce Trail, and to Bill Carey, Karen Carey, Marguerite Difilippo,

Francine Doyle, Sue Fitzgerald, Janice Given, Lynn Jones, Deborah Mills, Ian Mills, Praveen Sohrab, and Saabir Sohrab who completed the Peninsula section end-to-end.

Thank you to Saabir Sohrab, Randy Vanderlaan, Barb Reuber, and Tom Hall for leading and organizing this year's end-to-end hike.

Keep an eye on your inboxes in the coming weeks as we will announce registration details for three different opportunities to complete the Peninsula section end-to-end in 2023!



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## *Fundraiser for Meadow Restoration at Maple Cross Nature Reserve at Cape Chin*

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## Community Yoga in the Meadows

**BY MARG GLENDON**  
**PBTC OUTREACH AND**  
**MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR**  
**(SHE/HER/HERS)**

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The benefits of spending time in nature have been well researched - they include increased attention, improved cognition,

stress reduction, improved physical health, and increased happiness. Even the sounds of nature have a positive effect on us. (see the article "[Nurtured by Nature](#)" for an interesting read).

This summer, we were able to experience nature a bit differently, when local yoga practitioners offered two free outdoor yoga classes. Although the classes were free, donations were encouraged, and the classes raised over \$700, with 100 per cent of the proceeds going toward the meadow restoration at Maple Cross Nature Reserve at Cape Chin.

We are grateful to Barbara Rabicki and Laurie Canning, owners of Wild By Nature Forest Sanctuary, for hosting the outdoor yoga class at their beautiful location - and for the class facilitation by Chantelle Burbridge from Yoga Hive North. We are also grateful to Nina Andic and Barbara von der Heide of Loving Yoga for facilitating the mindful walk and outdoor yoga class at Maple Cross Nature Reserve at Cape Chin.

These experiences exceeded my expectations and made such a wonderful impact on all of the participants. Thank you.

[www.summerhousepark.ca](http://www.summerhousepark.ca)

[info@summerhousepark.ca](mailto:info@summerhousepark.ca)

Upcoming Hikes

**Easy Hikes** Series

**Bruce Trail CONSERVANCY**  
PENINSULA CLUB

**What is an easy hike?**  
Easy hikes are small group, short hikes (~3 KM) that are generally flat with little elevation change and mostly clear of tree roots and rocks. Hikes are adjusted according to weather conditions. Easy hikes allow us to hike at a slower pace and enjoy the journey.

<b>November</b>	<b>Burnt Loop Side Trail Lookout</b>
<b>28</b>	Meet at the National Park Visitors' Centre.
<b>December</b>	<b>Cape Chin</b>
<b>03</b>	Meet at parking lot at south end of Carter Rd.
<b>December</b>	<b>Horseshoe Lake Trail</b>
<b>05</b>	Meet at the Head of the Trails parking lot of Cyprus Lake Campground.
<b>December</b>	<b>Cape Hurd Alvar Bay Nature Reserve</b>
<b>12</b>	Meet at 745 Cape Hurd Road.
<b>December</b>	<b>Tobermory Village – Dunks Bay</b>
<b>19</b>	Meet at The Meeting Place, 20 Centennial Dr.

Join us for one or all of these hikes. **Registration is required.**  
If you would like assistance to register, please contact Marg Glendon at [pbtcoutreach@gmail.com](mailto:pbtcoutreach@gmail.com), or call 519-719-7739 or 519-596-8331

To Register, visit: <http://www.pbtc.ca/hikes>



## Conservation Matters: Unwanted Species

BY JOHN WHITWORTH  
PBTC BOARD OF  
DIRECTORS

### COMMON BUCKTHORN (RHAMNUS CATHARTICA)



COMMON BUCKTHORN BERRIES  
PHOTO: JAN SAMANEK, PHYTOSANITARY  
ADMINISTRATION, BUGWOOD.ORG

#### Distinct Physical Features:

- A shrub with elliptic to ovate leaves up to eight centimetres long and four centimetres wide; sub-opposite arrangement.
- Buds are sharp-pointed, black.
- Short thorns at terminal on some branches.
- Tight clusters of black berries in the twig axils in August and September.



COMMON BUCKTHORN LEAVES  
PHOTO: PAUL WRAY, IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY,  
BUGWOOD.ORG

This issue brings another entry in the Bruce Trail Conservancy's "10 Most Un-Wanted" list of invasive species. Thanks to BTC ecologists Brian and Adam for their help with this. Number 5 on our list is common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*).

#### Typical Habitat:

Dry and moist habitats; fields, fencerows, clearings, forests, and slopes.

#### Species Significance:

This is a non-native invasive species that can be difficult to get rid of. It is very shade tolerant, and can colonize understories to the exclusion of other species.

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*Small actions add up to make big changes. We can make a difference!*

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## Hike It! Love It! Keep It Clean! – And Earn a Badge

**BY MARG GLENDON**  
PBTC OUTREACH AND  
MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR  
(SHE/HER/HERS)

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Hike It! Love It! Keep It Clean! is a Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC) community science project. Trail users are invited to collect, sort and characterize litter, and submit their data to BTC. This will help increase local knowledge about type, amount and location of litter along the Bruce Trail. Participants can earn a BTC badge.



CALEY (PBTC HIKE LEADER) AT AN ENVIRO-HIKE AT LION'S HEAD NATURE RESERVE

During the summer, over 10,000 pieces of litter were collected from the Peninsula section of the Bruce Trail and Bruce Trail access points. The BTC analyzed the data that was submitted. The top three types of litter were: plastic items, cigarette butts and smoking-related items, and paper pieces (see chart). This data will assist with providing better anti-litter campaigns in specific targeted areas.

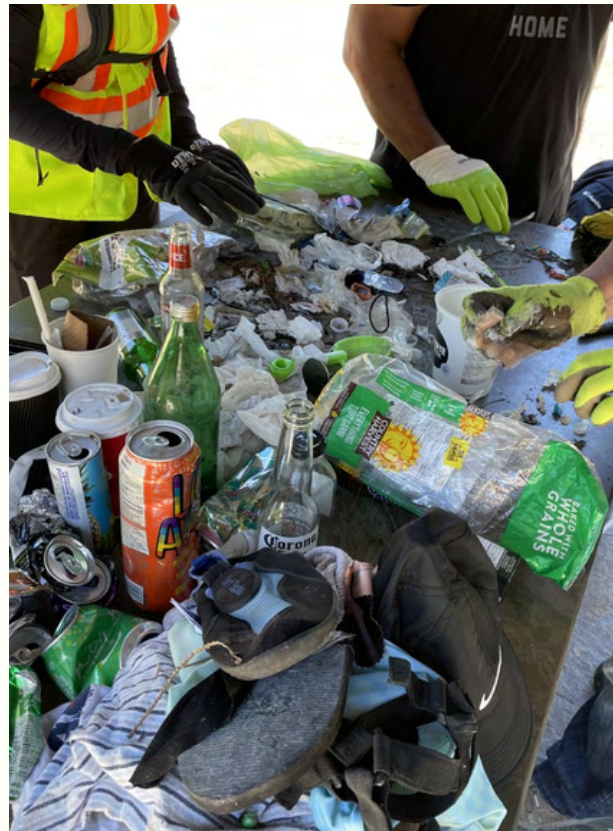
We collaborated with our community partners to offer Enviro-hikes and educational displays at Bruce Peninsula National Park and Ontario Parks at Lion's Head Nature Reserve. The Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula offered parking support. Trash Talk Conversation Cafés



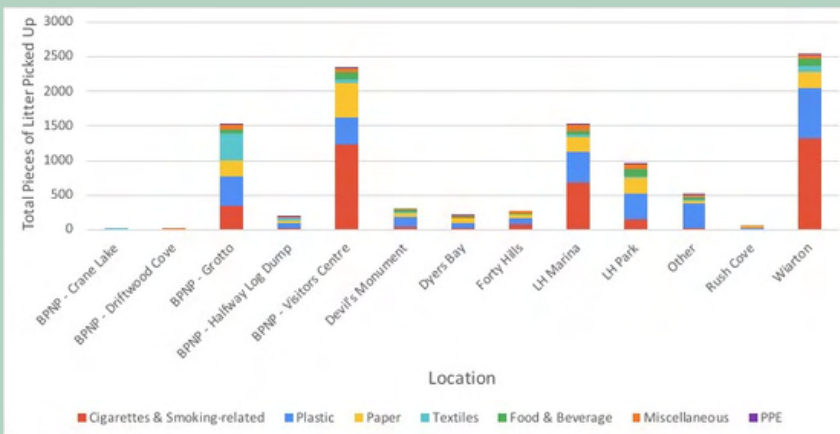
enhanced the Enviro-hike experience and educated visitors and trail users about trail etiquette, wayfinding and the impact of litter on the environment. What an amazing effort by a dynamic team of Peninsula Bruce Trail Conservancy (PBTC) volunteer litter ambassadors, trail ambassadors, Saugeen (Bruce) Peninsula community partners and individual trail users!

Hike It! Love It! Keep It Clean! is more than a litter clean up project - it's creating a solidarity movement to educate and inspire whole communities (visitors and residents) about the 5 Rs - Respect, Recycle, Reuse, Reduce and Refuse.

You can learn more about Hike It! Love It! Keep It Clean! [here](#).



PBTC VOLUNTEERS SORTING LITTER



TYPE OF LITTER ACCORDING TO LOCATIONS ALONG THE BRUCE TRAIL (PENINSULA SECTION) (SOURCE: HIKE IT! LOVE IT! KEEP IT CLEAN! PBTC SUMMARY - MARA MCHAFFIE, BTC ECOLOGIST)



BADGE FOR HIKE IT! LOVE IT! KEEP IT CLEAN!

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT BECOMING A PBTC VOLUNTEER LITTER AMBASSADOR, PLEASE CONTACT MARG GLENDON: [PBTCOUTREACH@GMAIL.COM](mailto:PBTCOUTREACH@GMAIL.COM).

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*How hard is it to find 15 species of orchid on the Bruce Trail? The first ever recipient of the PBTC Orchid Badge shares her secrets.*

---



LESSER PURPLE FRINGED ORCHID  
PHOTO BY MICHELE KITSON

## The Orchid Quest

**BY MICHELE KITSON**  
ORCHID HUNTER

---

I first learned of the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club's orchid badge in 2021 when I was working on the fern badge, and decided that 2022 would be the year that I would try to find, photograph and identify 15 orchids. The Bruce Peninsula is home to around 36 species of ferns and 44 species of orchids. I had been able to find 15 ferns without too much trouble, so how hard could it be to find 15 orchids?

I went to the Bruce Peninsula National Park visitor's center in Tobermory to view their orchid display. I obtained an orchid blooming chart that lists orchids by the month they bloom. I signed up for and watched the Bruce Trail Conservancy's orchid webinar. The first thing I realized was that although there are 44 species of orchids on the Bruce Peninsula, the majority of those orchids appear to be on the Lake Huron side of the peninsula and not necessarily along the Georgian Bay side (let alone the Bruce Trail). I even asked Willy, one of the presenters of the webinar, if it was even possible to find 15 along the trail. He chuckled when he responded and said that I would have my work cut out for me.



It was the latter part of May and I looked at the blooming chart to see what orchids may be out there and what growing conditions they liked. By this point I had hiked all of the side trails and the majority of main trail in the Peninsula section, so I was prepared to set out on my quest to find where on those trails those orchids were likely to be.

I mainly hiked side trails because I find that side trails are less travelled and less travelled should mean less likely to be inadvertently trampled. These trails usually have something to show you or take you somewhere. I was hoping they would lead me to many orchids.

My first hike out revealed five orchids. I found the yellow lady slipper, the lesser yellow lady slipper and the striped coralroot, which I photographed. I also found the western rattlesnake plantain and the helleborine - two orchids that can be found on many trails.



YELLOW LADY SLIPPER ORCHID  
PHOTO BY MICHELE KITSON



SPOTTED CORALROOT ORCHID  
PHOTO BY MICHELE KITSON

During the spring, summer and early fall I hiked slowly with my head down, always searching for orchids. Many hikes I came up empty-handed. Some areas that I thought should have had orchids had none, or at least none at the time of my hike. I must add that, this year, the regular blooming times had been thrown off by a slow start to spring-like weather. I hiked right past what I thought were striped coralroot before luckily taking a closer look and realizing they were spotted coralroot. I had found 11 orchids and the hunt was getting more difficult.

Orchid-hunting had taken over so much of my days; I really wanted to quit. I would hike an area for the 3rd or 4th time and find only ONE orchid. I mean literally one orchid of that species. You would think where there is one you would find many of the same, but not necessarily. I became very skeptical that I would be able to finish.



SHOWY LADY SLIPPER ORCHID  
PHOTO BY MICHELE KITSON

The Alaska rein orchid and north wind bog orchid that originally were difficult to find started popping up on all my hikes. I hiked one nine-kilometre loop at least seven times. That loop is home to eight species; unfortunately, I had already found seven of these orchids elsewhere. It was discouraging - so many searches with no results. I was getting so close but it felt so out of reach. I don't think I'd ever studied so many maps and done so much research into something. I took pictures of plants that I thought were orchids but weren't. My search took me over 130 kilometres. It wasn't an end-to-end but it may well have been.

I was at 14 orchids and had one left to reach my goal. I decided to repeat one of my earlier hikes that had revealed two orchids, and if I didn't find an orchid I would put my search on hold until the following spring. I hiked for three hours to where I thought I would find orchids, and probably stood there for 15 minutes searching with my eyes. Finally, I caught sight of one - only one - amongst the tall grasses: a nodding ladies' tresses, 15 centimetres tall.

At last, my searching was over. I am very happy to say I am the very first recipient of the orchid badge.

I was wrong in thinking this was an impossible task. It was definitely not easy, but it is possible. I found 15 orchids but I know of at least four more that I didn't see on the trails this year, but would like to photograph next year - if I can find them.

My choice camera is a Canon PowerShot SX60 HS and I just use the point-and-shoot auto mode. I find the camera lets me zoom in nice and close to the orchids allowing me to stay on the trail.



STRIPED CORALROOT ORCHID  
PHOTO BY MICHELE KITSON



3rd Annual

# CHRISTMAS BIRD ORNAMENT FUNDRAISER



This year's ornament is the beautiful snowy owl.

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Previous supporters of this fundraiser have already started inquiring about PBTC's bird ornament – it's becoming a local bird enthusiast's collector item.

Through the generous guidance of Susan Miller, a fused glass artist from Owen Sound, PBTC volunteers have been diligently creating this year's ornament. Special thanks to Susan and the volunteers – Laura Browne, Hanne Fynbo, Barney Hopkins, Jane Greenhouse, Darci Lombard, Owen Glendon, and Fran Turner. These volunteers spent many happy hours (and a few frustrating ones – but always fun) cutting, grinding, assembling and painting the feathers.

The ornaments are ready to hang, and include a lovely insert card with a description of the snowy owl and the purpose for the fundraiser.

They are boxed in a 4"X 4" jewelry box – perfect for gift-giving. They cost \$25 each (tax included) and will be available in mid-November. If shipping is needed, the purchaser will pay for the added cost. A limited quantity is available – only 100 – so they are sure to sell out very quickly!

All proceeds will be directed to protection of bird habitat and bird species at risk, and to education about birds on the Saugeen (Bruce) Peninsula.

We hope you enjoy these pretty Christmas ornaments and are inspired to spend a few hours watching birds in your neck of the woods.

If you are interested in purchasing an ornament, contact Marg Glendon, PBTC outreach and membership director at [pbtcbirds@gmail.com](mailto:pbtcbirds@gmail.com)

**SOLD OUT!**

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*How the Owl Foundation helped volunteers to save a wounded Snowy Owl*

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WOUNDED SNOWY OWL

## What Do You Do With a Wounded Owl?

**BY JAN MACKIE**  
PBTC VOLUNTEER

---

Most years in the early spring we become aware of owls near our home in the middle of the Peninsula. They might be owls that live close by or owls that are passing through on their way further north. We usually hear them more than see them. Our house sits where the forest

meets the meadow and that seems to be a perfect place for an owl to hunt the mice that scurry under the patches of snow that haven't quite melted. One spring I had been hearing an owl almost daily, wishing I could see it. It was mid-March and one morning Jim called me outside. There on our deck was a magnificent and huge snowy owl. It was tucked in the corner, seeming to be unable to fly.

Now, when you are in close proximity to an owl and it is looking at you, it's as though it is staring and seeing right through you. According to the [National Audubon Society](#), "The eyes of an owl are not true "eyeballs." Their tube-shaped eyes are completely immobile, providing binocular vision which fully focuses on their prey and boosts depth perception. Owls can rotate their necks 270 degrees."



When we looked closer, we noticed a drop of blood on the owl's wing. It had injured itself. Not knowing what to do next, I called a friend who is very knowledgeable about birds. His suggestion was to call the Owl Foundation on the Niagara Peninsula, a charitable organization that cares for and rehabilitates injured or orphaned owls. They were very helpful. They first asked if we were game to try to capture the owl. Having been stared down by it and seeing its fearsome talons, it took me a moment to answer. They then walked me through the possible ways to capture it and to call them when we had it boxed.

We began to put things in place for this scary venture. We found a box that was large enough for the owl to stand upright, but not allow it room to spread its wings. They had advised us to corner it. It had been conveniently in a corner of the deck when we first saw it, but by the time we were ready it had hopped down from the deck and was now in the open in our meadow. Realizing that it would be more difficult now, we decided to wait until the young folks we were expecting had arrived. Once we had four people ready to act, we equipped ourselves with blankets. We had been advised to approach the owl from four sides, each of us holding a blanket in front of ourselves to essentially disguise our human shape, thus confusing the owl so that it wouldn't attempt to attack us.



**waab-gookooko'oonh**  
is the Anishinaabemownin name for  
**Snowy Owl**

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
During the winters, when food is scarce in the Arctic, Snowy Owls migrate south and can be seen locally in remarkably high numbers. Look for them in the open fields around Boundary Road in Neyaashiinigmiing and around the Ferndale Flats.

Reference: A Field Guide to Neyaashiinigmiing and the Saugeen Peninsula, Kevin Kuipers and Jarmo Jalava, 2021 Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation Board of Education.

**Bruce Trail CONSERVANCY PENINSULA CLUB**

INFO CARD FROM THIS YEAR'S SNOWY OWL ORNAMENT FUNDRAISER

So, box and blankets ready, four adults walked forward slowly. At one point I tripped on something in the grass, falling face first about 10 feet from the owl, which clacked its beak threateningly. Once we were very close to the owl, which was very nervous at this point, the person with the largest blanket dropped it over the owl and we all, as gently as possible, held the blanket down while one person fetched the box. The blanket was lifted and the box dropped over the owl.



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We then called the Owl Foundation. They said they would arrange for a car relay for the next day and asked if we could drive the owl as far as Owen Sound. We kept the owl in its box in our entry for the night as it was still quite cold at night. The next day we drove to meet up with the next person who would drive it on further. Once the owl was received at the Foundation someone called us to let us know that the owl would be OK - one of the bones in its wing was cracked but the owl was young and would heal quickly. They also told us that upon examination of this beautiful bird, they found it to be the fattest owl they had ever seen. I guess our meadow is a great banquet hall for owls. Snowy owls are diurnal (daytime hunters) and it seems it had been feasting on the many mice that live in our meadow.

The folks at the Owl Foundation called us back a few times over the next couple of months, first to let us know that it was a one-year-old female who would have been headed for the tundra, its summer breeding ground. The last time they called was in June, to let us know that the owl had been flown up to Churchill, Manitoba on a research plane. It had healed well enough to be north for the breeding season.

It was fantastic to be in such close proximity to that magnificent bird and great to have learned about the Owl Foundation. We are now on their list of volunteer drivers and have since had two opportunities to assist with getting wounded owls to them.

So, should you ever have an opportunity to be involved in an owl rescue, be sure to call these folks - they are so very helpful, and do amazing work.

*Love hiking?*

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*Upcoming Event*



# CROSS COUNTRY SKIING CLASS

**FEBRUARY 3, 1:00PM - 2:30PM**  
**COLPOY'S SKI TRAILHEAD**

Join the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club and the Bruce Ski Club for an afternoon on the Bruce Trail at Colpoys Bay. Learn, or refresh your cross-country ski skills and techniques from a Bruce Trail Ski Club instructor. Don't have skis? Consider renting equipment from nearby Suntrail Source for Adventure in Hepworth. PBTC and SBTC members only. Registration required. Parking is available at the Colpoy's Ski Trailhead

TO REGISTER, VISIT [HTTPS://WWW.PBTC.CA/HIKES](https://www.pbtc.ca/hikes)

FREE FOR PBTC AND SBTC MEMBERS!







Two-hundred-forty American chestnut saplings were generously donated to the Bruce Trail Conservancy by the Canadian Chestnut Council to help bring this endangered tree back to sustainable levels. The American chestnut used to be known as the “granddaddy of the forest,” with trunks reaching six feet across. Sadly, in the early 1900s, a blight was introduced from overseas, causing most trees to die after 20-30 years. It is hoped that many of the American chestnuts planted on the Bruce Trail Conservancy’s Cape Chin property (MapleCross Nature Reserve) and at Tagwerk Farm will survive and be a foundation for the restoration of the woodlands that used to flourish there.

Over the years, these baby trees, and others planted by the Bruce Trail Conservancy, will be monitored by volunteer “tree monitors.” The Peninsula Bruce Trail Club is also planning some springtime tree and “berries for the birds” shrub plantings. Volunteers, including families, will be needed for these fun events.

## Digging in to Restore the American Chestnut Tree

**BY LAURA PISKO**  
DIRECTOR OF CONSERVATION  
AND LAND STEWARDSHIP

A shout out to the over 30 volunteers who enthusiastically dug their shovels into the ground on Sept. 27 and Oct. 3, 2022, to plant endangered American chestnut trees.







*Are you interested in helping to “re-wild” our Peninsula or to monitor baby trees?*

## **CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERS WANTED**

*Contact Laura Pisko, Director of Conservation and Land Stewardship, at [pbtc.dir.conservation@gmail.com](mailto:pbtc.dir.conservation@gmail.com).*



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*Being an ally involves a commitment to ongoing personal education.*

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BTC PRIDE BADGE

## BTC PRIDE Badge

**BY MARG GLENDON**  
 PBTC OUTREACH AND  
 MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR  
 (SHE, HER, HERS)

---

Badges mean something! For goal-oriented folks, a Bruce Trail hiking or conservation badge offers a physical or educational challenge and marks an accomplishment. For others, a badge is something we wear as an honour – badges are symbolic and convey important values and messages.

This summer, many trail users asked me, “Where can I get that badge? It’s so beautiful! How much does it cost?” They were talking about the new Bruce Trail Conservancy PRIDE badge. It’s unique and beautiful – and it’s not for sale!

This badge is earned through self-education and a commitment to welcoming everyone into a safe and inclusive environment. The BTC PRIDE badge is a symbol that celebrates the LGBTQ2SIA+ community.

I am writing this as a straight, cis-gender woman who is learning more about how to become a stronger ally to my friends, neighbours and members who identify as LGBTQ2SIA+. (Cis-gender means that one’s personal identity corresponds with their birth sex.)



Being an ally involves a commitment to ongoing personal education. Taking a course or attending that workshop or training is a start, but it also takes a deeper reflection into our personal daily interactions. I would like to share part of my story about becoming an ally.

### Language is important

I am working on using more gender inclusive language. It doesn't come easy to me, because I have been accustomed to using binary masculine/feminine pronouns. How people want to be identified is important and we should not make any assumptions! Common pronouns are he/she/they, him/her/them, they/them /theirs. An easy way to start is to include your pronouns next time you introduce yourself in a group, as this invites others to openly share their preferences.

### Take a course

BTC is offering Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) training and support for board members of BTC clubs, and will be available for general members who have an interest. This will help to raise awareness, and to give board members an opportunity to take responsibility and show leadership in building an inclusive BTC community.

### Education happens by listening, too

Invest time in listening to the concerns of the LGBTQ2SIA+ community and their suggestions about hiking on the Bruce Trail.

Each of us has our own journey in becoming an ally. Becoming an ally to LGBTQ2SIA+ friends, family and PBTC members will require a commitment to personal education, intentional listening, and becoming more language aware. I hope that by sharing part of my journey about becoming an ally, you will also consider how you can help to make the Bruce Trail, BTC clubs, and your own neighbourhoods safer and more welcoming.

The BTC PRIDE badge is not merely something you check off your "to-do" list; rather, it is an invitation for conversation and a sign that you are an individual who is committed to creating an inclusive and safe outdoor community.

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE, ATTENDING A BTC DEI TRAINING, TALKING, OR OBTAINING A BTC PRIDE BADGE, PLEASE CONTACT ME AT [PBTCOUTREACH@GMAIL.COM](mailto:PBTCOUTREACH@GMAIL.COM)**



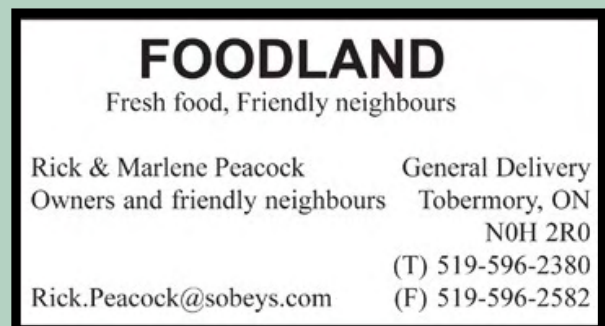
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Upcoming Event

Beginner's Guide to  
**SNOWSHOES &  
 CROSS-COUNTRY SKIS**



**FREE**  
 for Peninsula &  
 Sydenham Bruce  
 Trail Members

December 4th | 10:30am  
 Suntrail Source for Adventure  
 100 Spencer St., Hepworth, ON (near intersection of Hwy 6 and Hwy 21)

**What:** Learn about how to choose snowshoes and x-country skis equipment that fits you, what is best for your weight and weather conditions. Learn about the importance of layered winter clothing, and appropriate footwear and gloves.

**Why:** Snowshoeing is a great winter exercise that is a low impact aerobic exercise and allows you to explore the trails after the regular hiking season is over. It's easy to learn- and affordable. Renting equipment is another option - to find out if you like it. Get ready for the upcoming trail season!

**After the orientation:** At 1:00 p.m., consider joining PBTC for a "Get In The Spirit" Hike from Warton to Spirit Rock along the two local sidetrails. Get acquainted with one another after the hike with an outdoor gathering - shortbread and apple cider is provided.



**TO REGISTER, PLEASE VISIT**  
<http://www.pbtc.ca/hikes>



# Who Ya Gonna Call? – Graffiti-Busters

**BY LAURA PISKO**  
 DIRECTOR OF CONSERVATION  
 AND LAND STEWARDSHIP



BEFORE GRAFFITI REMOVAL



AFTER GRAFFITI REMOVAL

The Devil’s Monument is one of the Peninsula Bruce Trail’s most iconic spots. It is a “flowerpot” pillar located on the shoreline of Dyers Bay, created by erosion of the pillar’s limestone base by wind, rain, ice and water over many, many years.

Sadly, people have desecrated this geological wonder with graffiti. But our “Graffiti-Busters” (the Peninsula Stew Crew: Mark Shantz, Doug Miller, Tony Barton, and Bob Cunningham) were called

up for action. Their remedial work was a huge success – with the use of ladders, they were able to safely scale the Monument, remove about 90 per cent of the graffiti, and reduce the visibility of the rest. They deserve an A+ for outstanding conservation work!

Let’s hope that we won’t need to call the Graffiti-Busters again!

## Thanksgiving on the Bruce

BY JAN MACKIE



On Friday of the Thanksgiving weekend, good friends arrived from Montreal and Toronto along with our favourite visiting dog, Luna. I had gone to pick up a fresh 14-pound turkey from one of our favourite farmers, our friend Julie had brought the pumpkin pies, and Jim and I had pressed apples for fresh cider. The air was crisp and the leaves were turning their glorious fall colours. Everyone settled in – the 18-year-old in a tent, the 14-year-old in the loft, a couple in the outdoor guest room, and Julie and Luna in the library. Everyone had a very good sleep that night.

And then around 6:30 a.m. on Saturday morning, there was a noise. Each thought it was just someone else in the house getting up noisily. I told Jim, “Oh, it’s just likely the teenager jumping down from the loft platform.” Julie thought it was Jim dropping something, as he is usually the first one up and is not known for being quiet. And the little dog sleeping in the library didn’t even bark.

Jim got up about 20 minutes later. He went outside and we heard him shout, “The turkey’s gone!!!” My first response was, “What about the pies?”

There on the ground, under the cover at the back of the house was our stainless steel cooler (which has a great latch) dumped over, and the turkey gone! I was flabbergasted that some creature would be brazen enough to go under the cover at the back of the house, climb the steps, haul the cooler down, and push it about eight feet away from the steps before opening it. Amazingly the glass jug of cider and the two pumpkin pies in their flimsy boxes were undamaged. It had to be a bear! Nothing else would have been strong enough to haul away that large bird.

We were all stunned and a bit scared to think that now the bear might return. And then early Sunday morning we found several buckets of apples tipped over. Maybe the bear wanted the pies, but we had eaten them – hah!! Fortunately, Anita (of DeJong’s) was able to sell us another turkey which we of course found room for in the fridge instead of in the latched stainless steel cooler on the back steps. (But it did make for a very expensive Thanksgiving dinner!)



I guess now that the cottagers are gone the bear is looking for new homes to raid, so we'll have to be vigilant for the next while and not provide it with other opportunities. Our son is bringing us an airhorn should we manage to see the thief lurking about. At least it wasn't lounging in the hot tub when I went to empty it.

Well, when my sister, who lives in South America, heard the story she remarked, "Now the bear is 14 pounds fatter for its hibernation - think of it as a good deed." That's a sweet sentiment but I don't think she really understands that now we are a target. Maybe the bear could stick to apples which are everywhere on the ground despite our cleanup efforts.

Now we are locking our doors at night for the first time in 15 years. They have handles that open by pushing them down, and the bear could figure that out quickly if it smells any of its favourite foods inside.

Oh well. I guess that's what comes with living next to a beautiful forest.

OK, so now we are at October 15. Our bear, which we now call Nuisance (short for nuisance) returned a couple of times in the week after Thanksgiving, leaving us



BEAR TRACKS ON THE DECK

a couple of large dumps about 30 to 50 feet from the house, one on the path from the guest room to the house which someone stepped in in the morning. Yuck! And then a few days later we discovered that Nuisance had gotten into the guest room, breaking through the screen on the bottom half of the new door and yanking down one of the door quilts. But there was no food to be found (that's a firm rule around here - no food in the outdoor guest room) and no evidence of any other damage. It seems Nuisance is focused solely on food - not interested in the nice bed or the rocking chair.

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And then on the morning of October 20, our son received, on Facebook, a short video of Nuise dragging a bag of garbage into the bush. (The bear had a very graceful backwards walk - perhaps in another life Nuise was a dancer.) The friends who took the video have a cottage near the end of Rush Cove Road. They had been awakened by Nuise looking in their sliding glass door to their deck, right next to where they were sleeping. The bear had then tried their other door to see if it was open, before wandering off to collect garbage.

A few days ago we went out to our far orchard to collect apples, and there near the trees was one big pile of apple poop and two smaller ones. We suspect that this may have been left by a mother bear with two cubs that our son had seen in the spring by his cabin in the woods; if so, we believe she is the turkey thief and is scrounging food for three for winter hibernation. I hope she and the cubs make it through the long winter.

And how is this story relevant to Bruce Trail hikers? Well, the trail goes through our property and the wrapping for the turkey was later found very close to the trail. So be sure to not carry food that will attract a hungry bear, and it's best not to hike alone. Generally, bears do not like to encounter humans but always be on the alert as you don't want to accidentally startle them. Also, remember that bears are particularly hungry in the spring and fall. And gather whatever information you can regarding what you can do to stay safe. The forest is their home - we are the guests.



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## Trail Ambassadors, Then and Now

**BY BRENDA STEWART**  
PBTC DIRECTOR AT LARGE

Did you know that “trail ambassadors” have been around on the Bruce Trail before? Previously, however, they were known as trail rangers or trail runners. In fact, the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club (PBTC) hired their own trail runner, in 1995 and 1996, to patrol the Lion’s Head section and McKay’s Harbour.

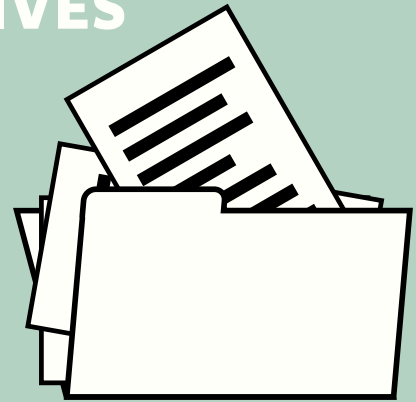
Even before that, in 1980, with funding from the provincial government’s “Experience ’80” program, the Bruce Trail Association (BTA, now Bruce Trail Conservancy), hired several students to patrol the trail in different club sections. These young people were tasked with performing trail maintenance and supervision, as well as providing contacts with landowners.

The Peninsula club, in a letter dated March 31, 1980, to BTA executive director Mary Munro, expressed the desire that trail runners in the Peninsula section should be local resident students who were familiar with the area, and that they should confine their efforts to trail work and education of hikers, leaving public relations with landowners to the club directors and executive.

This year was also, coincidentally, the year that the three northern Bruce Trail clubs were amalgamated into the current Peninsula Bruce Trail Club.

The trail rangers were invited to attend the BTA annual general meeting in the fall of that year, at which the guest speaker was none other than artist Robert Bateman.

## FROM THE ARCHIVES



*Did you know that “trail ambassadors” have been around on the Bruce Trail before? Learn more, from the archives...*

Two of the Peninsula trail rangers in the summer of 1980 were Lisa Bellmore and Sherri Hunter, both Grade 11 students at Bruce Peninsula District High School in Lion’s Head. Another student, William Tyler Bell, acted as the supervisor for the group.

The program continued for the next two summers as a joint venture between the BTA and the Ministry of Natural Resources, which provided the funding for the Experience ’80, ’81, and ’82 programs. In 1982 William Tyler Bell returned, and he and Janice Manley were the two students hired as trail rangers for the Peninsula section.

Because of supervision and work scheduling issues during the 1982 season, however, and due to the ministry’s tightening budget, only three students were hired for the 1983 summer season.

Under tighter supervision from the BTA trail director, these students had responsibility for the entire Bruce Trail, and combined their ranger activities with staffing of the BTA summer office in Tobermory.



Jane Groves and Doug Tyrell (Iroquoia Trail Rangers)



Bill Bell, Lisa Bellmore, Sherri Hunter and Richard Ventham, (Peninsula Trail Rangers)

## TRAIL RANGER PROGRAM

### *The Rangers on the Trail!*

Starting June 23rd., thirteen young people, most of them Bruce Trail hikers and products of outdoor education classes, began their summer program of patrolling the Trail.

The Rangers' primary function is the education of Trail users to use the Trail

and its environment wisely. The Rangers will also assist the local clubs in programs of Trail maintenance and supervision and contacts with land-owners.

The Rangers are monitoring the Peninsula, Sydenham, Blue Mountains,

Toronto and Iroquoia Trail sections – a total of 278 miles of Trail.

The Ranger project is largely funded by the provincial government's "Experience '80" program and the remainder by the BTA.

SOURCE: BRUCE TRAIL NEWS SUMMER 1980

Unfortunately, the program was cancelled outright in the following year.

In September of 1994, at a PBTC board meeting, Ross McLean brought up the issue of garbage at the McKay's Harbour campsite. In his report, he noted that in the spring of 1994 a Bruce Trail member and resident of Lion's Head had reported the campsite as "disgusting," only two weeks after a major clean-up effort.

In mid-June, Ross described leading a group that had removed six full garbage bags of debris from the site. He suggested that "a Trail Runner be hired, or the BTA will lose this campsite." This individual would be responsible for garbage pick-up, hiker education, destroying illegal campsites, etc. It was also suggested that a high school student from Lion's Head be hired for the upcoming summer season, commencing on May 1. Ross made a motion to hire a student, on the condition that the club expenditure not exceed \$1,000. The motion carried.

A local student, John-Michael Gamble, whose family lived on Moore St. in Lion's Head at the time, was subsequently hired for the position.

He was to start the weekend of May 29, 1995, and finish on October 7. His job description had three main duties:

- To inspect McKay's Harbour campsite twice weekly and to clean up garbage there, clean out the main fire pit, destroy any illegal fire pits, and clean out the latrine.
- To inspect the blazed hiking trails at Gun Point and perform minor maintenance and report any major problems requiring a work crew.
- To assist in public education of backpackers/campers and hikers: inform them about the Bruce Trail and the BTA; distribute membership information; inform them of no-trace camping, hiking; and to check for illegal parking.



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*“By both promoting leave no trace practices on site and directly addressing some of the major human impacts, Trail Ambassadors will help to protect the Niagara Escarpment environment and enhance the Bruce Trail experience for all.”*

BTC MAGAZINE, SUMMER 2022

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1994 TRAIL RUNNER JOHN-MICHAEL GAMBLE (SOURCE: DR. J.M. GAMBLE)

Gamble did this job for two consecutive summers. In the final report written by Ross McLean in the fall of 1995, he stated: “I received positive comments from both hikers and community residents in appreciation of the Peninsula Club’s attempt to manage the area.” “He was a resource person, for example, when on a June weekend a hiker broke an ankle. He ran back to the hospital to report the injury, and later spoke to the lady. Although not part of his job description, this “service” was appreciated when the need arose.” “There is every indication that trail usage continued in 1995 with the same degree of popularity, the Trail Runner on one day on the May holiday weekend met “a minimum of 70 hikers.””

In his report, Ross quoted BTA trail director David Moule: “I think the Trail Runner definitely had a beneficial affect (sic) on the campsite this summer.”

I contacted Dr. J.M. Gamble who is a clinical associate professor in the School of Pharmacy at the University of Waterloo. He kindly agreed to an interview about his time working as a trail runner during those two summers. This is a summary of our conversation in September:

Gamble said he was hired for the job just before his 16th birthday. He had just finished Grade 10 at Bruce Peninsula District School. His family home was on Moore St. near the Bruce Trail, and as a runner, he practiced on the trails in the area and knew them intimately.

When asked if he had any memorable experiences from those summers, he said he was shocked, when he first started, by how much garbage there was at McKay's Harbour, and remembers that it took several trips back and forth to carry it all out. In Ross Maclean's final report, he wrote that on Gamble's first days of work (the long weekend in May), he had arrived at the campsite to find eight or nine new fire pits and a latrine filled with garbage. (Ross McLean also commented in his final report that Gamble had to be convinced, after this experience, that it was worthwhile to stay on the job!)

When asked about the general demographic of the hikers he met, Gamble said they were mostly day hikers from other areas. He also said that there were lots of rock climbers, whose main concern seemed to be that he did not snitch on them for being off-trail!



TRAIL AMBASSADORS, 2022, PENINSULA SECTION L. TO R.- VANESSA CARRUTHERS , BRENDA STEWART (THE AUTHOR), AND RHIANNON KOOS AT THE ENTRANCE TO CAPE CHIN MEADOWS SIDE TRAIL.

Gamble related how, after those two summers, he went on to work for a few years for Parks Canada at the Bruce Peninsula National Park and Fathom Five visitor centre, a job which included doing a trail survey.

## WELCOME TO THE NEW-PENINSULA BRUCE TRAIL CLUB

On May 4, 1980, the Board of Directors approved a recommendation of the executive and directors of the three northerly Trail Clubs (Peninsula, Lions Head and Lower Bruce) to amalgamate and to be known as the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club.

The northern clubs felt the amalgamation would provide a more efficient organization and subsequently a better

service to the Trail user in the Bruce Peninsula sections of the Trail.

The President and Director of the new Peninsula Club is Shirley Johnstone. Shirley is carrying on the tradition established by herself, her late husband J.P. and their family who have been involved with the Trail since its earliest days.

The other members of the executive

are Kay McClellan, Ron Gats and Jerry Blair – all of whom have worked hard to maintain the Trail community in the area.

We extend best wishes to the new Peninsula Bruce Trail Club, our gratitude for its work on behalf of the membership and our promise of support for its endeavours.



At the time of my interview with Gamble, the final 2022 report from the Peninsula Club section's BTC trail ambassadors Rhiannon Carruthers and Vanessa Koos had just come out. In their report, they highlighted the following findings, which I shared with Gamble. I asked him to comment on them with respect to his experiences from 1995.

### **I ASKED GAMBLE IF THE ISSUES FROM THE 2022 REPORT ARE SIMILAR TO HIS FINDINGS IN 1995?**

#### **2022 Hotspots, Common issues**

Lion's head lookout is still the number 2 hotspot, behind the Grotto. Most of the hikers here were day-hikers, who were from out of town. The most common issues there were wayfinding, Litter, not prepared for the hike, not aware of the BTC.

**Gamble:** Yes, very similar! McKay Harbour was the worst spot - for fires, and litter.

#### **2022 Common Trail Etiquette Issues**

The most common trail etiquette issues we experienced, were, in order of most to least common, People off trail, Dog/Human Feces on trail, Dogs off leash.

**Gamble:** Yes, there were people off-trail, but as far as dogs on the trail, not many dogs were seen .... I didn't see that many people per day as you would see now - maybe 2-15.

#### **Litter**

The most commonly littered items were cigarette butts (26.5%), followed by plastic food wrappers (19.8%), then paper items, (15.2%)

**Gamble:** Not as much litter was found on the trail; it was mostly at McKay harbour.

**Q.** What insight or advice might you have regarding the job and being close to nature, i.e. What would adult Dr. Gamble say to young J-M. Gamble?

**Gamble:** "I now recognize the importance of exposing young people to nature at a young age. I would have encouraged him to get more of his peers involved."

**Q.** As you reflect upon your years of hiking experience on the Bruce Trail, how do you feel about it?

**Gamble:** "The Bruce Trail is a gem."

**Q.** What would your message be to the current BTC trail ambassadors?

**Gamble:** "I am encouraged that the trail ambassador program has been reinstated. Young people should be exposed to nature at every opportunity. The trail runner job was my first job; it was a dream job, and I have told as many people as I can what a wonderful experience it was."

I would like to thank Dr. Gamble for agreeing to share his memories of those summers with us. The trail ambassador program is indeed a worthwhile experience that has touched the lives of many hikers and students.



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(LISTED EXCERPTS ABOVE ARE TAKEN FROM THE PENINSULA TRAIL AMBASSADOR FINAL REPORT-2022):