



RIDEAU TRAIL
ASSOCIATION



NEWSLETTER

Winter 2025-26

Issue No. 218

welcome WINTER



Trails for all Seasons

Over the last year members were asked to hike the same area and take a picture of the same spot in all 4 seasons. Kingston submitted their group photo in the same spot at Lemoine Pointe Conservation Area at the same bench and highlighted the people vice the trail, and Ottawa submitted a nice set of photos from Morris Island Conservation area showing the beauty of the upper Ottawa Valley Near Arnprior.

Kingston Wednesday Walkers: The photos were taken at a bench along Trail 5 at Lemoine Point Conservation Area.



Fall photo taken October 2024. Photo credit goes to John Cruickshank.



Winter photo taken February 2025. Photo credit goes to a passerby.



Spring photo taken May 2025. Photo credit goes to Peggy Jackson.



Summer photo taken August 2025. Photo credit goes to Jennifer Brinkman

Ottawa Club: Morris Island, 4 Seasons of Beauty All photos by Carol Seal



Late-Oct. 2024



Late-Jan. 2025



Mid-May 2025



Late-Aug. 2025

Member Services (Who gets your question?)

Whatever the question, just call the RTA for your club (page 5-6) or email: info@RideauTrail.org

Address Changes / Paper Newsletter

To stop it, or to receive it, call or email:

membership@Rideautrail.org

DIY Option: "Update your Preferences"

You can update your membership preferences [here](#) or from the link provided at the bottom of membership related emails.

End to End Badges

Keep track of the details of your hikes, whenever you did them: Date, start and end point of the hike and the leader's name. Send questions or claims to the RTA by phone, or you can email the appropriate club contact.

Getting Involved

It's a busy organization, volunteers are always welcome. Please contact those listed on (page 3) indicating your volunteer interest such as co-leading hikes, supporting your club's committees, working on the Trail maintenance or any other interest you may have.

What Will the Outing be Like?

The three main factors in rating an outing are Effort Intensity, Technical Challenge and Pace Intensity. For each, Moderate is defined this way:

Effort Intensity: similar to walking on a hilly forest trail

Technical Challenge: similar to needing careful footing

Pace Intensity: steady, with periodic breaks and allowance for unplanned breaks

The Levels serve to summarize that detail.

Level 1: All parameters are "Low" or up to one parameter may be moderate. The least difficult type of outing.

Level 2: At least 2 parameters are "Moderate" and no more than one parameter is "High". An outing with mid-range difficulty.

Level 3: At least 2 parameters are "High" or at least 1 parameter is "Very High". The most difficult type of outing.

Note that you can also find the latest, detailed guide to the Hike Classifications by going to the 'RTA Calendar Help' (<https://teamup.com/ks4o7f1oa94o7taugd>) and click on "Outing Classifications".

Hike Leaders can gain further assistance on completing the Hike Description portion by clicking on the "Leader Instructions" link in the area immediately under that.

Badge Request Contacts

Entire End to End

(Winter or otherwise)

awards@rideautrail.org

Rideau Trail Secretary

Kingston Club

jkbrinkman59@gmail.com

Jennifer Brinkman,
Kingston Club Volunteer

Central Club

hmrob@storm.ca

Mary Robinson,
Central Club Secretary

Ottawa Club

ottawasecretary@rideautrail.org

Denise Hall
Ottawa Club Secretary

Blue Trails

Submit your record of hiking the designated Blue Trails to your Club's secretary / badge volunteer.

Locks Endeavor

Submit your record of hiking the designated hikes to your Club's secretary / badge volunteer.



Activities Calendar

Each club uses email to remind members of hikes and other outings. Check the member hub at

<https://www.rideautrail.org/member-hub/>

<https://teamup.com/ks4o7f1oa94o7taugd>

News and Notes from the Clubs - Winter 2025

Central

When attending an outdoor event, be safe; be prepared. Remember, for the safety of the group, a leader can refuse to accept a participant who is not ready for the outing's challenges.

MEETING PLACE

Unless otherwise specified, meet at Conlon Farm in Perth. Gore St. southeast through Perth to County Road 10 (Scotch Line), turn right towards Westport, then turn at the 4th street on the right (Conlon Drive) and proceed to the Conlon Farm parking area. GPS: 127 Smith Dr. K7H 0A3

Questions/Contacts

General: central@rideautrail.org

Activities: activities.central@rideautrail.org

Events and Activities

Although emailed notices might come from the Club, be sure to check the **Activities Calendar** for the latest

updates. <https://teamup.com/ks4o7f1oa94o7taugd>

Special Events

- Dec 6 - Perth Santa Claus Parade
- Dec 14 - Christmas Social

Please sign up on Team Up Activities Calendar so we have an idea of numbers for both activities.

Regular Activities

(Every week, conditions permitting)

Wednesday Wanderers - Shorter, leisurely hikes for those who want a mid-week stretch.

Friday morning walks—Every Friday from the Hour Glass Coffee Show parking lot

Other Outings

The Central Club offers hiking at Murphys Point and at various conservation areas.

Remember:

<https://teamup.com/ks4o7f1oa94o7taugd>

Ottawa

When attending an outdoor event, be safe; be prepared. Remember, for the safety of the group, a leader can refuse to accept a participant who is not ready for the outing's challenges.

Meeting Places

Transit construction can affect access to the meeting places. Check with the Calendar or the leader.

Kichi Zibi Mikan: Parking lot at the south east end of the Champlain Bridge often used in winter for hikes but also used in other seasons by some leaders

Tunney's Pasture: The government parking lot on the west side of Parkdale Avenue just across from Emmerson Avenue.

Fallowfield Park & Ride: The northwest parking lot of the Park & Ride station, off Fallowfield Road west of Woodroffe Avenue. Park near the drop-off area by the bus shelters.

Bate Island: In Spring, Summer and Fall, meet on the east side of Bate Island. In the winter, meet in the NCC parking lot at the south east end of the Champlain bridge.

Questions/Contacts

General: ottawa@rideautrail.org

Activities: ottawa.activities@rideautrail.org

Calendar of Events:

<https://teamup.com/ks4o7f1oa94o7taugd>

Events and Activities

A monthly eNewsletter from the Club advises of coming events, but be sure to check the **Activities Calendar** for last minute updates.

<https://teamup.com/ks4o7f1oa94o7taugd>

Special Events

- Bi-monthly Social
- Rideau Canal Skating

Regular Activities

(Every week, conditions permitting)

Events include a stop for lunch, sometimes **outdoors**.

Tuesday Trails: Impromptu, sometimes rugged level 2 hikes. Kathryn Fournier lou_daybreak@hotmail.com

Wednesday Walkers: impromptu level2 and 3 hikes

Other Outings

Weekend events are also plentiful with various levels. Outings might visit Marlborough Forest, Mer Bleue, Lac Philippe and other locations.

Remember: <https://teamup.com/ks4o7f1oa94o7taugd>

Kingston

When attending an outdoor event, be safe; be prepared. Remember, for the safety of the group, a leader can refuse to accept a participant who is not ready for the outing's challenges.

Questions/Contacts

General: kingston@rideautrail.org

Events and Activities

The Club sends regular notices by email. Be sure to check the **Activities Calendar** for the latest updates.

<https://teamup.com/ks4o7f1oa94o7taugd>

Special Events

- Blue Trails in Winter
- My Favourite Hike

- Snowshoeing, XC Skiing, and Skating
- Great Gould Lake Challenge
- 17th Annual Spy Rock Caroling and Dinner
- Christmas Social
- Monthly Socials

Regular Activities

(Every week, conditions permitting)

Tuesday hikes at Lemoine Point for those interested in a brisk 10 km walk.

Wednesday Walks - Ideal for people interested in healthy exercise walking at a comfortable pace with some social interaction. Walks depart every Wednesday at 1:30 pm (9:30 am, July and August)

Contact Jennifer at kingstonwalks@rideautrail.org

Thursday - In Little Cataraqui Conservation Area, Lemoine Point and other local areas for those interested in a brisk 10 km walk.

RTA Turns 55 in 2026

As many people will know, the RTA turns 55 in 2026! So, in celebration what we are working on:

An Association Picnic on Saturday July 11th 2026. Will be at the Rideau Ferry Yacht Club Conservation Area again, as in previous years. This is on the Calendar already, and so you can sign up now!

Designing a '55' Badge that can be achieved by completing one of the following (some tweaks still being worked out!).

- Hiking 55 times during the year
- Hiking 55 km in each sector
- Completing 55km over two weekends (in 2 hikes)
- Visiting/Finding/Doing 55 things out of a list of 125 or so. Such things as hiking 5.5km on the trail; Visiting an RTA Noticeboard; Volunteering at an RTA Event. All things associated with the Main or Blue Trails.



Badge is still being designed. Full Details will be on the Member Hub before the end of the year.

We have volunteered to host the Hike Ontario Summit on September 26th 2026 in RTA Land. Share our birthday with other Hiking Clubs in Ontario!

Watch the Calendar and the RTA Member Hub Page for more details. thanks. Jim Moss.

RTA Governance and Bylaw UPDATES by Rust Bassarab

As part of the RTA's efforts to implement the necessary steps/elements to try to achieve the goals in the Strategic Plan, the Board created a Governance Committee. This committee is made up of both Directors and non-Board members (with known interest and/or past experience in organizational governance). This committee has been meeting monthly and have already completed several important steps, including:

- ♦ a tabular listing of all motions passed by the RTA Board (since records were kept)
- ♦ a repository of all extant RTA policies in any area
- ♦ a tabular listing of all policies that should exist, along with status (current, outdated, non-existent/required)
- ♦ concentrating on Board related policies first they have written, and obtained Board approval for, three new policies related to improving governance (starting with an improved Conflict of Interest policy)
- ♦ conducted a full review of RTA Bylaw #4.1, made proposed changes and received Board endorsement for those changes

RTA Bylaws

While the Board has endorsed the proposed changes to RTA Bylaws, only the membership can approve (or not) the changes – these will be reviewed under a Motion presented at the RTA AGM May 9, 2026 in Smiths Falls. The initial known flaw, was that RTA Bylaw #4.1 (written to factor in changes due to the ONCA legislation) was approved when we were still under the belief that the official name of the organization was "The Rideau Trail Association Incorporated". When all changes to our Articles of Incorporation (formerly known as Letters Patent) were filed with the Province of Ontario it was determined that the legal name is "Rideau Trail Association". Additionally, review indicated that RTA Bylaw 4.1 contains areas that are somewhat confusing, some areas where it is quite difficult for the Association to adhere to in practical terms and some areas where the wording no longer makes sense under the newer RTA operating structure.

The purpose of this section is to provide some background on the parameters used to complete the review, as well as some background on key changes that are being proposed. The guidance used during the reviews included the following:

- ensure the wording corresponds correctly with the ONCA legislation
- clarify wording to eliminate confusion between the past and current operating structures
- make the wording useful to Directors, Officers and Members
- ensure that the sections are logical in sequence and flow
- ensure the wording is such that it is practical for the RTA to follow our Bylaws in practise

The final parameter may seem strange as organizations are legally required to follow their Bylaws. Notwithstanding that legal truth, it is estimated (by government studies) that over 80% of not-for-profit corporations don't operate completely in accordance with their own Bylaws (or their Bylaws are not fully within official legal parameters). The majority of the proposed changes involve either rewording for better clarity or modified sequence. For all aspects of the review it was necessary to revisit the ONCA legislation in order to ensure correctness, and this drove some of the change proposals.

There are two areas of proposed change that deserve more detail and attention – now as part of this article, in the documents that will be included in the official notification of the AGM, and while the motion is considered at the AGM.

Board Makeup.

Bylaw 4.1 calls for there to be 8 elected Directors plus 4 ex-officio (by virtue of their position) Directors. The latter 4 are the 3 Club Representatives and the Past Chair (currently there is no provision for the fact that the Past Chair may not wish to continue). Our Articles of Incorporation, which have higher precedence, state that there must be a minimum of 6 Directors and no more than 16. So at the previous AGM when we only elected 7 Directors last year, plus the 3 ex-officio Club Representatives (the Past President chose to not continue after about 15 years of Board service), we believed that there was no legal issue. However, the detailed review of ONCA legislation confirmed that "if you fail to elect the number of directors stated in your bylaws" that you need to call a Special Meeting of Members as promptly as possible. At that meeting members must either elect up to the number stated, or pass a Special Resolution formally accepting the number being different from what is stated in the Bylaws. **Cont....**

Governance and Bylaws Cont...

Given the ongoing problems finding willing a capable volunteers, having to follow such a procedure could end up costing a great deal of inconvenience to both members and to the Board. In order for our Bylaws and procedures to remain legal while avoiding such difficult procedures, proposed changes are being made. The proposed statement is that, within the minimum and maximum numbers stated in the Articles of Incorporation, the Board will annually confirm the number of Directors that will be up for election at the AGM. Procedurally, the initial number will be published as part of the official notice of the AGM.

The number will be finalized and published 14 days prior to the AGM. This procedure allows for the number to be increased if suitable nominations come in from the membership at large. The proposed changes still include the 4 ex-officio Directors, with appropriate caveats and procedures in the event that any of those individuals either don't wish to, or are unable to, act as Directors. In essence, the Board is requesting that members trust the Nominating sub-committee, and the Board as a whole, will strive to obtain as many strong candidates as possible for potential election as Directors, but with greater flexibility to avoid the procedures that are currently legally required.

Restrictions on length of tenure/re-election.

In the past it was commonplace for there to be restrictions on the length of time that Presidents/Chairs/Vice Presidents could hold their position. The ONCA legislation made some key changes in procedures and time restrictions. The only ONCA time restriction is that Directors may not be elected for any term greater than three years (under our Bylaws we only elect Directors for a term of one year). The three year term is based upon one single election. ONCA legislation does not contain any restrictions for the number of times that any Director can be re-elected. Directors can only be removed from their elected term of office (in our case 1 year/until the next AGM) by a normal resolution at a Special Meeting of Members (along with some legal things like death, bankruptcy, letter of resignation). Procedurally, the new legislation requires that the Chair be appointed by the group of Directors at the first meeting following an AGM; rather than the previous procedure where members specifically elected an individual.

Now the Chair is appointed by the group of Directors (both the elected and the ex-officio directors). Our current Bylaws have stated restrictions for the President (ONCA requires the Chair to also be an Officer, though they don't specify title or duties – in our case the appointed Chair becomes the President) and the Vice-President, both of which are now Officer positions. Officer positions and removals are done solely by the Board, so those restrictions are not required and the current Bylaws restrictions don't apply correctly. They need to be either removed or reworded to apply specifically to the Chair or individual Directors. IF so desired, these restrictions could be reworded and added into our Bylaws, but the opinion of the ONCA legislation was that these are not necessary to impose due to the new procedures involved (where the decision is made by the Directors as a group). The recommendation of the Board is to remove these restrictions.

As stated, the purpose of the article is to provide some background as to why some changes to our current Bylaw are being proposed and will be part of a motion to be reviewed at the next AGM. The exact wording of the proposed new Bylaw will be available along with the Notice of the Meeting when it comes out next spring.

RTA INSURANCE

There are always questions and concerns about what RTA Insurance is for, and what it covers. This article will explain the basics and provide some of the updates that were presented by our "broker" at the Hike Ontario Summit held in late September.

Who Provides the Insurance

The insurance is provided via Hike Ontario, through a devoted team of brokers at Arthur J Gallagher Canada Limited, and ultimately the insurance carrier is GameDay Insurance/Excess Underwriting. The Gallagher company are one of the largest brokerage firms around, and they specialize in sports insurance. Due to the number of Hike Ontario member clubs involved, they have a three-person team devoted to this specific insurance portfolio. The advantages of this are primarily twofold. The first is that the brokers have become quite familiar with hiking, and other self-propelled activity, specific risks. The second advantage is that the number of clubs involved brings more leverage to negotiations than are normally present.

Cont...

Insurance continued....

Details of Coverage

Kind of Insurance? Liability insurance, i.e. protection against lawsuits. Note, it can't stop anyone from initiating a lawsuit, but it does mean that legal defence would be provided and that any settlements (up to limits of our coverage) are covered by the insurance. It does not currently include any personal accident insurance.

The RTA has three components to the coverage:

- \$5M Commercial General Liability – Any one occurrence
 - Protects members and volunteers in the event they are sued alleging negligence causing bodily injury or property damage (defense and payout)
 - This is the portion that covers landowners and any rented/used meeting or training location and, when requested, Certificates of Insurance for specific locations or events can be obtained
- \$2M Directors & Officers – Aggregate
 - Protects against civil actions, wrongful acts and includes Employments Practices Liability
- \$1M Errors & Omissions – Aggregate
 - Includes wording that may protect against civil actions, wrongful acts but does not include Employments Practices Liability

Who? Hike Ontario members (and Hike Ontario itself) who opt in to the insurance, including the RTA. Liability coverage includes member groups (RTA), members, landowners and volunteers.

What is Covered? All “sanctioned” activities (again, this is from a liability perspective). It protects the Activity Leader(s) and the RTA as an organization. Sanctioned activities include hiking activities plus specified non-hiking activities - such as trail maintenance, trail building, member training events, open houses, membership meetings, fundraisers, certification programs, promotion activities, publication of newsletters, annual awards ceremonies and wind-up banquets. Sanctioned activities can also include (with some constraints)

cycling, paddling, and cross-country skiing, with an underlying assumption that the activity is led by someone with appropriate experience for that activity. As an example, it would be fine for any experienced paddler to lead a day outing, provided it did not include any whitewater paddling. However, a multi-day paddling expedition requires either a specific qualification (these do exist but are qualifications granted from outside the RTA and Hike Ontario) or more advanced experience.

What is not Covered? As previously indicated, whitewater paddling is not covered by our insurance and is a non-sanctioned activity. Any activity that involved a competition, particularly one that is essentially a race, is not covered by standard insurance. As an example, a 30 km bike ride along the Cataraqui Trail would be covered so long as it was not conducted as a race. It is worth noting that to qualify unquestionably as a sanctioned activity, the activity should be a “legal” one.

Driving. Our (liability) insurance does not provide coverage when travelling inside a car. In Ontario this part of the province's No Fault Insurance structure, so all claims go through the injured party's automobile insurance. The same often holds true for an individual walking across a road, whether the individual was in the automobile at the time, or not (these are personal accident insurance issues). In more serious cases police involvement may be required. The key for RTA members and leaders is that the liability insurance does not apply directly in any road accidents. The risks involved are no greater, or no less, than at any other time that people are driving.

Additional Coverage? When there is a desire to run a “special event” that is not clearly within the explanation of sanctioned activities, then a detailed submission should be made through Hike Ontario and can be underwritten by the insurer on a “case by case basis”, normally with an additional premium. As an example, when the RTA conducted the 50 km in one day event (with some Trail runners - but not racing from any official perspective) while some COVID restrictions were still in place, it was necessary to make a special submission that outlined both general safety and COVID safety precautions and procedures. That event was approved as a sanctioned activity, and no additional premium was necessary.

Cont...

Insurance Cont...

Any Doubt About a Particular Activity? If unsure about whether the planned activity qualifies as sanctioned, then please obtain confirmation through the Activities Committee.

Conditions of Coverage (warranties in insurance terms)

CPR / First Aid Condition

It is recommended to have one Hike Leader or volunteer to be certified in First Aid / CPR, especially in more remote area.

Radio / Cell Phone Condition

There is a communication device available to the activity leader that is capable of summoning emergency assistants at any time.

Trail Building Maintenance Condition

All volunteers working on trail building and / or maintenance must sign a waiver and be supervised by a qualified team leader.

Power Equipment Condition

All power equipment must be used by experienced personnel wearing proper safety equipment (i.e. eyeglasses and work gloves etc.) and have suitable instruction in the use of that equipment.

Implied Conditions

During both the formal portion and the question period in the presentation by the broker team lead, it was clear that they utilize Hike Ontario published

guidance and qualifications as “implied conditions” in that they do check to make sure that any activity of concern was conducted in accordance with said guidance and qualifications. This includes signing and retaining (period of time still not confirmed) activity waivers. This highlighted the need for the RTA to use Hike Ontario qualifications and guidance, but to also amplify both of those to suit RTA requirements and to work with Hike Ontario to ensure that we have the opportunity to influence those.

Potential Additional Coverage Areas

It was indicated that the brokers are looking into offering personal accident insurance to Clubs in addition to the liability insurance categories. From a Club perspective it would be coverage for all members, or none at all. The thing for individuals to think about is whether it would be worthwhile to pay an additional \$1 (approximate number only at this stage) per person in annual fees for all members to gain personal accident insurance for all participants. More details will be circulated once any firm details are known.

At our request, the brokers will also look into the possibility of offering personal accident insurance specifically for trail maintenance volunteers (so that the RTA can make a decision on paying for such coverage).

Trail Alerts and reroutes

Recent changes Trail alerts can be found on the RTA website and are also linked to the appropriate Map page.

<https://www.rideautrail.org/discover-the-trail/trail-alerts/>

Kingston

The route through private property between 07C on Concession Rd 9 and east along the ridge halfway towards 07D is closed for the full hunting season annually from 1 Oct, opening again on 1 Jan of the following year. Bob's lookout is still accessible from the Westport Trailhead approaching from the east. In order to maintain future trail access to this property, during this time take the diversion along County Rd 12 (Salem Road), and note that a blue

route bypass is anticipated through Westport in Nov 2025.

Central

Permanent trail reroute in Smiths Falls 12C-12D - The trail between 12C and 12D that originally passed through the industrial area of town has been rerouted to follow the river west on highway 43 and through more residential areas. Map 12 has been updated. There has been a minor adjustment to the eastern entrance to the blue loop at Bedford Mills, in order to avoid a small section of private land. The route is open for use and the new trail section is well marked.

Ottawa

Temp Reroute 19G to 19H - Now expected to complete in Spring

RTA-2025 Fall Westport Trip

The trip in the Frontenac area from October 14-17th was attended by almost 30 RTA members with representation from all 3 clubs. We filled the Cove Inn with overflow accommodations at the Black Dog and the Upper Rideau B&B.

A variety of activities were offered every day and included hikes such as the Gibson Loop, Tetsmine Loop, Big Salmon loop, and the Cedar Lake Loop in Frontenac Park. Hikes along the Rideau Trail in the Bedford Mills and Foley Mountain areas and the Massassauga Trail were carried out. A walk in Gananoque and a chance to see a play (The Piano Teacher) at a theatre was also offered.

We were blessed with sunshine all four days. There was still a lot of autumn foliage to enjoy and we spotted lots of deer in various places. On one hike we were witness to a beautiful buck close to our trail who did not seem alarmed by us at all. One of our groups, while travelling in their car, had a small grouse think it owned the highway and they had quite an amusing time watching its antics.

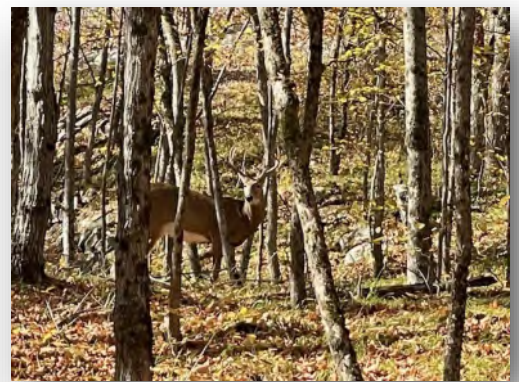
Many thanks to all of our leaders – Roger Reens, Pat and Bert Stranberg, Erica Phillips, Ingrid Monasterios, Carol Seal, and Vivien Ratcliffe.

Denise Hall, Trip Organizer/hike leader.

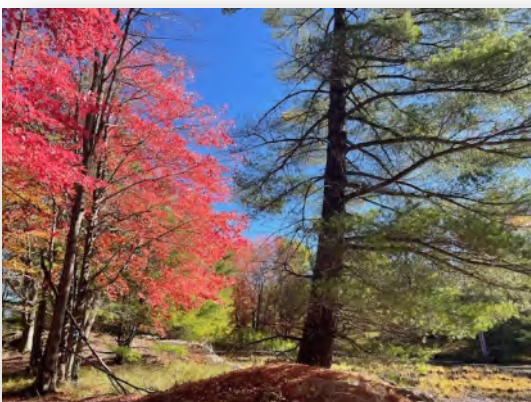


2025 Westport Fall Trip Group

Photo submitted by Kevin Chapman



Buck on the trail. Photo
by Kent Phillips



Massassauga
Creek Hike and
Cedar Lake Loop
Photos by Denise
Hall and Carol Seal

Remembering Nanette Whitwam (1927-2025)



Nanette Whitwam, a past RTA president and accomplished volunteer, passed away peacefully in Ottawa on October 3, 2025 at the age of 98.

She was born in Pangbourne, England on January 6, 1927. Nanette worked for a time as a schoolteacher on the Isle of Wight before emigrating to Canada in 1959 with her

husband and first-born child. Three more children were born in Canada and were raised in Ottawa.

In her late 50s, she took up hiking, backpacking and traveling while continuing to volunteer with several organizations. It was around this time that Nanette joined the Rideau Trail Association (1986), and she soon started leading hikes and making an impression on the RTA leadership. Nanette was elected to the Board of Directors in 1987 and served as President from 1989-1991.

For many years starting in 1992, Nanette coordinated the Ottawa Wednesday Walkers program in collaboration with Dorothy Belter. She and Dorothy are credited for making this a very popular and successful part of the Ottawa Rideau Trail Club's activities. And before we came to rely on e-mail and the RTA website as our point of contact for the general public, Nanette was responsible for answering calls to the Ottawa Rideau Trail Club's telephone number – a very important and time-sensitive role. She ensured that those inquiries got to the right person in the Ottawa Club so that answers could be relayed to the callers.

Another one of Nanette's major contributions was her suggestion at the 2003 AGM that the RTA get involved in the City of Ottawa's Adopt-a-Roadway cleanup program as a form of community outreach. This idea was approved by the Board, and a 6-kilometer section of Roger Stevens Road west of North Gower was selected. She led the first cleanup in May 2005. Her legacy lives on as described elsewhere in this edition of the Newsletter.

Many people have told me that Nanette was one of the most patient and knowledgeable hike leaders in the Ottawa Rideau Trail Club and described how

much they enjoyed going on her hikes. At the 2007 AGM I had the honour of presenting the Outstanding Service Award to Nanette in recognition of all her contributions to our organization.

Nanette continued walking and hiking until 2023 when unfortunately, a broken hip curtailed the activity that she loved so much. She was a modest, soft-spoken and dignified person with a heart of gold and she will be greatly missed by her family and all who knew her.

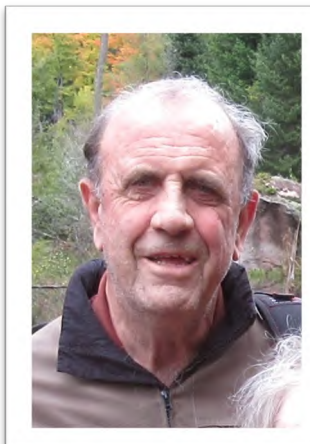
by Ron Hunt

Remembering Nigel Brereton

One of our longtime members, Nigel Brereton, died peacefully after a number of years in declining health in Ottawa on August 3, 2025.

In his working life Nigel was an urban planner. He was also an avid hiker who joined the RTA in 2001.

Soon afterwards he volunteered to head publicity on the executive of the Ottawa Club. He was very active in developing display booths for special events held in Ottawa and then became Club Rep on the RTA Board.



Years ago, when the RTA brochures needed reprinting, Nigel took on the task of redesigning it and having it reprinted. He was also an instrumental player in working with the NCC and Parks Canada when the Ottawa trailhead had to be moved. Nigel volunteered to handle the design of a new sign and permissions to get this accomplished.

Nigel was also an active hike leader for the Ottawa RTA and he was one of the first hike leaders I followed when I joined the RTA in 2006. I loved Nigel's hikes, his friendly manner and sense of humour. He was a very intelligent, hardworking individual with patience and perseverance. In 2011 he was Ottawa Club's Outstanding Service Award which was well deserved.

I plan to offer a hike in Nigel's memory in the near future. He was a wonderful man and will be fondly remembered by those of us who knew him.

By Denise Hall

Frontenac Park Celebration 08 Nov 2025



This was the celebration for people who successfully completed the 2025 Frontenac Challenge. These are some of the successful RTA Members who attended today (years completed in brackets): **Back Row:** Jim Moss (7); Dave McNicoll (6); Janice Dowling (6); Rusty Bassarab (7); John Witjes (10) **Middle Row:** Eileen McNally (1); Jamie Leslie (2); Robert Tolley (15); Natalie Bayfield (2); Don Workman (10); Nienke Hoedeman (12); Valeria Santana (1); Margaret Taylor-Picard (9); Sue Lansing (3) **Front Row:** Louise Langlais

20th anniversary ADOPT-A-ROADWAY Cleanup by Carol Seal

Adopt-a-Roadway is a city-wide program that encourages volunteers to take on a roadway cleanup project to improve safety and promote a healthy natural environment by keeping Ottawa City clean, green and free of litter. As nature lovers, why wouldn't we participate in such a program? This year celebrates 20 years of Ottawa Club volunteers picking up litter, twice-yearly, from the road allowance the Club adopted. The 5.5 km stretch of road along Roger Stevens Drive provides access to the Rideau Trail as it goes through

the Marlborough Forest. Over the years, incalculable bags of garbage have been filled for collection and disposal later by the City. Other discovered trash of note are: a TV, a mattress and box spring set, the front bumper of a truck, a dog house in disrepair, and a roll of soggy carpeting. A puzzling "find" was a neatly-placed stash of about a dozen Mason jars filled with dill pickles. Without doubt, the best find was twenty-dollar bills strewn along the roadside; \$240 was collected and spent afterwards by the cleanup crew for well-deserved refreshments at a local pub.

How did we come to participate in the Adopt-a-Roadway program? The idea for getting involved was suggested by Nanette Whitwam at the 2003 RTA AGM as a form of community outreach. The Ottawa Club agreed to implement her idea and in spring 2005, Nanette led the first cleanup along the selected stretch of adopted roadway.

There have been five subsequent cleanup organizers. In fall 2006, Suzanne Brown took over from Nanette. In January 2011, Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson presented Suzanne with a certificate in recognition of the eight years Ottawa Club has participated in the program (see the Spring 2011 issue of our newsletter). Brian LaDuke began leading the cleanup in spring 2012 with Denise Hall assisting him beginning the following spring. Marianne Kerkhoven organized the cleanup in spring 2022 and Denise Hall took over in the fall of that year. Since fall 2024, yours truly has been organizing the cleanup under Denise's tutelage and assistance.



To recognize our efforts, the City installed this sign at each end of the adopted roadway.

Not to be overlooked are the volunteers whose participation included using their truck to transport the bagged garbage and other trash to the collection point for pickup by the City. They are: Brian Carr, Shirley & Mike Beaudin, Kevin Reynolds, and Kayla Robertson. Apologies if I've missed anyone.

Many thanks to all the volunteers who have participated in our roadway cleanup over the years. Thanks also to Ron Hunt for alerting me to the 20th anniversary, as well as to Jack Tannett and Kevin Chapman for digging up information for this article.

The cleanup crew in October 2025



2005 End-to-End: Fun and Friendship

By Ron Hunt

On October 4, 2025 a group of Ottawa-based members of the Rideau Trail Association (RTA) gathered to celebrate and reminisce about completing the end-to-end of the Trail in 2005. The group is pictured beside the Bruce Henderson memorial bench in Britannia Park and includes Suzanne Brown, Maureen Dawson, Louise Dignard, Joan Evans, Kathryn Fournier, José Havet, Ron Hunt, Doris Ihrig, and Maryetta McDowell.

We are all 20 years older now and remember the challenges that had to be overcome between April and October in 2005 to accomplish the end-to-end goal within the calendar year. But we also remember the great fun.

There was the bus driver who looked like Kenny Rogers. A brand-new member, Bruce Henderson, entertained us with his poetry and antics. Suzanne Brown carried a fully loaded backpack as part of the training for her upcoming Pacific Coast Trail trip. Mud, bugs, summer heat, water hazards were compensated by the glory of the spring flowers, vistas and fall colours. The joyful singing of Suzanne Brown and Louise Dignard inspired us to carry on. We carried a message from the Mayor of Ottawa with greetings for the Mayor of Kingston. Along the way we met the mayors or representatives of the cities of Smiths Falls and Perth as a goodwill gesture to raise the profile of the RTA.

Many new friendships developed between the Ottawa, Central and Kingston Club participants during this E2E and the bonding solidified at the two great parties in September and October as we got to the end of the project.

Unfortunately, some of the Ottawa-based participants of the 2005 E2E have passed away: Bruce Henderson (2015), Ruth Hutchinson (2018) and Paula Ainley (2024). We paused to remember them at Britannia Park in Ottawa before starting our walk on October 4th.

After visiting the Ruth Hutchinson memorial tree, the group walked to Westboro Beach along the Ottawa River Parkway. We wrapped things up with a dinner and presentation and were joined there by Trudy Stephen, another member of our band of 2005 hikers.

A big thank you to Maureen Dawson and Joan Evans for organizing the reunion.

In closing, here is an excerpt from Bruce Henderson's poem *It's a Long Way from Richmond Landing* [the former Ottawa trailhead] that captures the spirit of the 2005 E2E:

Seasoned vets and rawest rookies,
Together we will hike.
Fearless leaders, sweeps and cohort,
We disdain airplane and bike
Rideau Trail has been our highway
Two thousand and five has been our year
We'll be hiking in the future
Ever onward, never fear.
Photo by Hugh McDowell



Hiking in Pennsylvania with the RTA by Louisa Carling

The RTA hosted its third annual trip to Pennsylvania from May 9 to 12, 2025. The trip was based in the Allegheny Mountains in Ulysses, PA and featured spectacular hikes in nearby Susquehannock State Forest and state parks and wilderness areas. May was the perfect month to visit the area with its spring blossoms, moderate temperatures and no crowds.

The trip was full at 15 participants including 2 leaders and 13 hikers from the RTA Kingston, Central and Ottawa clubs. Note: there's still space left for the May 2026 trip! The trip included four days of moderate hiking from the morning of Friday May 9 to late afternoon on Monday May 12, which gave us time to explore the area's scenic trails, small towns and local museums.

Hike leaders Bill Ottney and John Arrigo planned all the hikes. John is a Pennsylvania native and longtime friend of Bill's and is an expert on the trail network and the area's history. John and Bill arrived a few days early to do pre-hikes and trail maintenance to ensure the routes were in good shape. They planned hike routes that offered beautiful views that we could walk at a moderate pace.

We stayed at the Susquehannock Lodge and Trail Center whose website says: [A thousand miles of hiking trails](#) in the region offer a variety of experiences... including the Susquehannock Trail System.. Black Forest Trail, the West Rim Trail atop the PA Grand Canyon and the new Leonard Harrison Park Trail which overlooks Pine Creek.

Trails were not difficult or steep, and the daily hikes lasted from 3 to 6 hours per day. I noticed everyone was able to keep up. The most skill required was walking up to the lookout over the Pine Creek Gorge, known locally as the PA Grand Canyon, and located in Leonard Harrison and Colton Point State Parks. We followed a narrow path and had to look down to ensure safe footing but it was quite manageable and all the hikers succeeded. Some hikers were at peak fitness levels but overall, I'd estimate we were at moderate-level and the groups hiked at a comfortable but not fast pace. I liked the fact that hike leaders John and Bill offered both short and long hikes: I did the shorter ones and added in some birding back at the lodge. Spring birding in the Alleghenies was wonderful!

Our 'home' during the trip was at Susquehannock Lodge, owned by Carol and Ed Szymanik and located near the town of Ulysses. The lodge is directly beside the Alleghenies and had stunning views of emerald green fields and low mountains. The lodge was attractive, cosy and quiet. Hikers stayed in the main house and two smaller buildings next door.

We chatted on the lodge deck before dinner and had delicious, homemade breakfast and dinner in its dining room. In the evenings, Bill Ottney gave fascinating talks with photos of past RTA trips and hikes to western US national parks with his wife Gunhild.



Susquehannock Lodge and the Allegheny Mountains



RTA trip leader Bill Ottney at Susquehannock Lodge

As an example of a daily hike, on Friday morning or Day One, the group headed up the trail located directly beside the lodge, passing through a kind of 'enchanted valley' with overhanging trees and took an easy climb up the low mountain. John Arrigo has become an expert on the area's trails and history and described the timber boom of the latter part of the 1800s when oak, hemlock and white pine trees were felled and carried out of the forest by train on temporary tracks that lay exactly where we stood. It was a strange feeling to know so many people had worked and lived in this area in the recent past.

Continued next page....

At the top of the small mountain, our group split into two and the long-distance hikers continued for about 20km and returned at 4pm, while the shorter-distance hikers trekked for about 10km and arrived home in time for a nap and some birdwatching. Pennsylvania's mountains were alive with arriving warblers, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, Purple Martins, Barn and Tree Swallows and more.

Ensuing hikes were at other nearby trails and to locations a short drive away. Bill and John chose hikes with great views and variety of natural and historical landmarks.

Pre-dinner social times were picture-perfect and a template for the evenings to follow. Hikers that wanted to socialize sat outside and enjoyed the spring air, some for the first time since fall some eight months earlier. We enjoyed munchies, drinks and stories. John Arrigo brought ingredients and garnishes to create tailor-made martinis for the group, including non-alcoholic martinis for his wife Carol and other hikers. Thank you to John and Carol, for your generosity and making every evening feel like a special occasion!

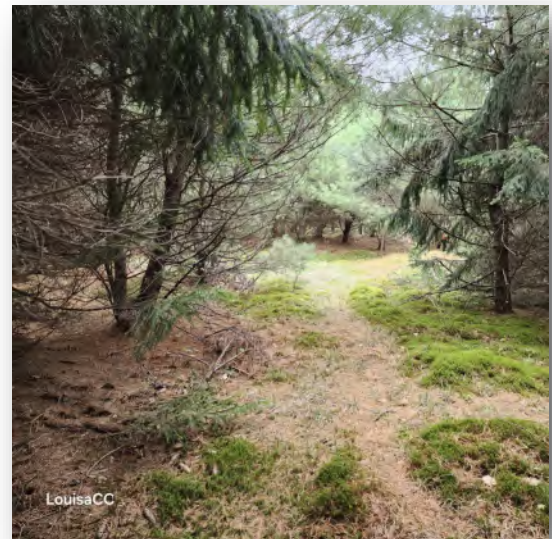


Pennsylvania's 'Grand Canyon' in Colton Point State Park.

The four-day trip to Pennsylvania showcased the Allegheny Mountains in all their spring glory. Hikers experienced beautiful views, moderate trails and interesting small towns. The tour was a treat after a long Ontario winter. Perhaps we'll see you in 2026!



The Allegheny Mountains beside Susquehannock Lodge at sunset.



Day 3 featured a colourful, dry landscape along a creek.



Hiking in the Allegheny Mountains.

The Environment Corner By Alan Smith

We have added a further 3 boot brush stations to our network making a total of 17. The latest were added by the central club in the Murphys Point Provincial Park area, with the assistance of local Scouts. The locations are Lally Homestead, Black Ance and Long Lake Rd. There are plans to add more in the areas around Mica Mines Conservation Reserve and the Marlborough Forest in the near future.



During the winter it is more difficult to identify invasive plants, however, a few remain obvious all year round. One of those is Phragmites where the tall reed stems and seed heads are clearly visible throughout the winter, and periwinkle an invasive ground cover that never fully dies back and may peak out through patches in the snow.

Phragmites (*Phragmites australis*) otherwise known as the European common reed is an invasive perennial wetland grass that forms dense monocultures up to 5m in height and has been declared the most invasive plant in Ontario. For those who like me drive the 401 corridor east, it is prolific, getting more abundant as you approach Montreal. This is one of the few invasive plants where Ontario has placed it on the restricted list and started a grant system for its eradication. The grant system is managed by Conservation Authorities; and I have been involved with CRCA (who manage the south of our area) from both a municipal and RTA perspective. In 2024 they were focused on identifying the locations and density; in 2025 they were spraying the roadside corridors along which it spreads (unfortunately less the 401 which is MTO controlled); and, in 2026 they are focused on pairing with municipalities, parks, organisations etc. to eradicate within their boundaries.

Its dense monoculture stands out-compete native plants

for space, nutrients and sunlight, displacing native sedges and cattails, and reducing important wildlife habitat. It transpires water quicker than the native vegetation reducing water levels and the dry stalks increase wildfire risk in the fall. It is distinguishable by its height, leaf structure and large seed heads. It should be noted that there is a native *Phragmites* that does not pose the same negative issues as it does not create such large monoculture stands, which can be identified by smaller seed heads and most definitively by differences in the Ligule (leaf attachment); unfortunately well in excess of 95% of the plants you see will be the non-native *Phragmites*. They spread by both seed and rhizomes, with rhizomes making up 80% of the biomass.

Control methods depend on the size of the infestation, ranging from spading, cutting to down and most commonly herbicide application. Key to management is the early identification of infestations, and right now by the inclusion of infestations in the grant funded management program led by your local Conservation authority. If you have some in your municipality, speak to them about joining the program, noting that a small amount of funding is required to obtain grants; my municipality has voted the funding to join the program in 2026.



.....Environmental corner continued

Periwinkle looks lovely in the garden. It provides a dense dark green ground cover for almost all the year (up to 15cm) which expands rapidly to cover spaces in flower beds. It is highly efficient at stifling growth of other plants and has delicate purple flowers. These great qualities in the garden are exactly what makes it so invasive when it escapes into wilderness areas, where it forms a monoculture that is inedible to almost all native fauna and can spread at up to 5ft per year. Small patches can be managed by labour intensive digging ensuring that all roots are removed, but larger patches are likely best managed by smothering with dense canvas for over 12 months. Periwinkle is particularly resilient, so managed areas will need to be monitored for a number of years for signs of regrowth. A couple of years ago I dug out a large patch where my property meets the local woodland, and was delighted to see trout lilies erupt from dormant bulbs below the surface the year following. If you see patches of this in local parks and woodland areas, I commend you to please report it using EDDmaps and make appropriate management staff aware of its presence and invasive nature.



As our AWARENESS increases and our PREVENT program matures through the addition of more boot brush stations, I am keen to better UNDERSTAND what is on our trails. To that end I am requesting that readers note where the following specific invasive species are on the Rideau Trail or our Blue Trails: Japanese Knotweed, Dog Strangling Vine, periwinkle (in a non-urban / garden setting), Himalayan Balsam and Giant Hogweed.

Please notify me of any sightings on our trails by email to Trailcoordinator@rideautrail.org.

If possible include a photo, detailed location, and let me know if you have updated EDDMaps.

Hiking in Ontario provides numerous physical and mental health benefits, including improved cardiovascular health, stronger muscles and bones, and reduced stress and anxiety. It also offers environmental benefits by connecting people with nature, promoting conservation, and supporting biodiversity.

Why Lead a Hike? by Carol Seal

On October 26th, after having taken hike leader training and then rehearsing the practical skills while hiking with a fellow leader and supportive friends, Ms. Hua Lei led her first, official hike. It was a lovely, autumn day when she led nine of us Ottawa Club members on an enjoyable 12 km, level 2 hike in fantastic South March Highlands Conservation Forest.

When later asked how she felt about leading her first hike, she said, "I felt very good about the first hike: nice weather, friendly hikers, and a few tips from other leaders during the hike. It gave me more confidence to lead in the future." We would be blessed to have Hua lead more hikes. She told us her plan, executed the plan lawlessly, and checked often on how the group was doing.

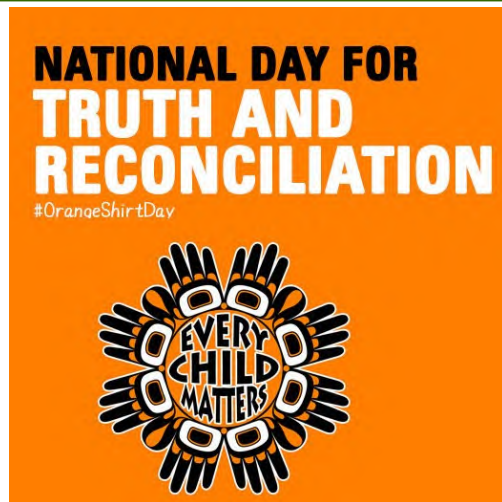
Why did you volunteer to lead a hike? Her response was, "RTA has many great leaders, be it hiking or skiing. They led by example, showed their knowledge and skills, and cared about their fellow members. They inspired and encouraged me to step up and lead when needed." Such sentiment grows great leaders.

There's no arguing the fact that volunteering and doing community service is a part of what Hua does in her spare time. Without fail, she volunteers to help out in our Club's twice-yearly Adopt-a-Road cleanup.

A few years ago, the RTA needed to fill the role of Treasurer and advertised the position on its public Facebook page. Hua, who is a Chartered Professional Accountant, answered the advertisement and got the job. In January 2023 and in one fell swoop, she became a Member of the Board of Directors (comes with being the Treasurer) and a member of the RTA. Lucky for us, she's now also an active hike leader!

Our fearless leader on her first group-led hike. Photo credit: Denise Hall and Group photo by Kevin Chapman





Commemorating the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation at Beechwood Cemetery

On September 30, Kathryn Fournier led a moving and insightful walk through the Beechwood Cemetery in honor of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

One of the most thought-provoking elements of the walk was the Great Canadian Plaques, placed in front of the graves of prominent Canadians whose actions significantly impacted the Indigenous Communities. These plaques strive to present a balanced narrative—acknowledging both achievements and shortcomings. Two individuals stood out in particular:

Dr. Peter Henderson Bryce, a tireless advocate for Indigenous children's health, who courageously documented the health abuses and alarming death rates within the residential school system.

Nicolas Flood Davin, author of *Industrial Schools for Indians and HalfBreeds*, a publication that laid the groundwork for the creation of residential schools.

We also visited a display of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action, followed by an art exhibit inside the Beechwood National Memorial Centre. The exhibit featured powerful works by Indigenous artists across various mediums—painting, photography, sculpture, textiles, and mixed media.

The day concluded with a poignant Reconciliation Ceremony at the Children's Sacred Forest, a space inaugurated in 2023 as a memorial to those affected by residential schools. The ceremony honored the children who never returned home and featured a deeply emotional music and dance performance.

A heartfelt thank you to Kathryn for organizing such a meaningful and unforgettable experience.

By Ingrid Monasterios.

A female dancer carried a baby-sized animal skin adorned with a pair of hanging baby moccasins—a



haunting and symbolic tribute.

VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED FOR TWO KEY ASSOCIATION LEVEL POSITIONS

Marketing and Communications Officer

The Marketing and Communications Officer leads the Marketing and Communications Committee in the development and implementation of marketing and communications activities for the Association that will be effective, consistent and meaningful for both the public and RTA members. The Marketing and Communications (M&C) Officer reports to the Board. For day-to-day operations coordination is done with the President.



Key Skills. The M&C Officer should be familiar with basic Marketing principles. The RTA has an approved Strategic Plan and an approved Marketing Outline. The M&C Officer will chair the M&C Committee, organize and control a budget, direct the work of content providers and coordinate the effort of members of the M&C Committee. Good administrative capabilities are a definite asset.

For further information, interested volunteers should contact Rusty Bassarab, president@rideautrail.org for a more complete job description and discussions. There is some flexibility in some aspects of the position, and the Association is happy to consider position sharing options.

Webmaster Assistant

Keeping the RTA website current takes a lot of effort. We are looking for individuals who have some experience with placing content on Wordpress based websites. Some experience with the Elementor extension is helpful, but not essential. We are happy to assist in the further development of people with some baseline skills.

For further information, interested volunteers should contact Rusty Bassarab, president@rideautrail.org or Chuck Paterson, webmaster1@rideautrail.org



Congratulations to this years End to End award-ees

Name	Start	Finish	Club
Susan Goff	Jan 15, 2021	Apr 19, 2025	Kingston
Paul Galipeau	Sep 26, 2015	Aug 25, 2025	Ottawa
Chris Johnston	April 24, 2010	October 5, 2025	Central
Kathy Baker	Sep 14, 2021	Oct 2, 2025	Kingston
Lisa Nicholas	Sep 14, 2021	Oct 2, 2025	NA
Melodie Mortensen	April 8, 2021	Nov 6, 2025	Ottawa
Jon Mortensen	April 8, 2021	Nov 6, 2025	Ottawa

200 miles to Kingston every step of the way

WESTPORT, Ont. (CP)—A 200-mile Rideau hiking trail from Kingston to Ottawa was opened Sunday at Foley Mountain by Jack Davis, federal environment minister.

Mr. Davis walked part way along the trail and said it offers a retreat for those trapped by urban living.

The Kingston Field Naturalists Club started the idea for the trail at a meet-

ing last February and persuaded land owners to grant access to hikers.

A \$34,000 Opportunity for Youth grant last summer was a major factor in the trail's being completed so quickly, as the grant enabled the Rideau Trail Association to turn over its list of access routes to 30 college students who did the route markings.

BLAST FROM THE PAST.

This was originally
published in the
Ottawa Journal on
Nov 8 1971

The Opening Day
of the Rideau Trail
at Foley Mountain

NEW MEMBERS TO THE RIDEAU TRAIL ASSOCIATION

Central

Patti Kravacek
Treff Peters
Meg O'Mahony
Barb Sohn
Chris Strasser
Cathy Fretz
Gérard Boyer
Marina Quattrocchi
Sally Ziskowski
Jane Garbutt
Terry-Lynn Sigouin
Dave Silvester

Kingston

Nick Parson
Yun Huang
Darren Knight
Jane Southern
Marcia Kim
Jeremy Collie
Coral Vail
Andrea Larsen
Cal Schram
Brad Roberts
Sandy Roney
Sherrie Edmunds
Vicki Mitchell
Chelsea Herman
Laura Miltchin
Citlalli Perez
Colleen Bernard
Lou La Rocque
Beth Wylie
Stephanie Rowe
Susie (Shirley) Nakatsu
Kanji Nakatsu

Ottawa

Zhuhong Li
Barbara Davignon
Liz Elton
Meng Zhang
Jing Chen
Hannah Mulligan
Lynda Cronin
Carol Grant
Sarah Cooke
Jennifer Davies
Dinh Ly
Marie Yelle-Whitwam
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Still true today . Originally published in the Ottawa Citizen on Aug 10 1996

Rideau Trail offers escape from big city pressures

By Chris Mikula

Citizen staff photographer

As I stepped carefully over a fallen tree, my foot stopped. Looking up at me, inches away and frozen by instinct, was a young fawn hidden in the brush.

The fatigue and the bugs which had been foremost in my mind were instantly forgotten. This and moments like this one are the reasons I hike.

I first discovered the Rideau Trail by accident more than 20 years ago. Having recently moved to Ottawa, my parents decided it would be a good idea to go for a walk in the Greenbelt.

We assumed the orange triangles marking the trail would take us in a loop back to our car. Hours later, beyond the Greenbelt, a passing motorist picked us up and told us we'd been heading to Kingston.

As the years went by, my interests in both natural things

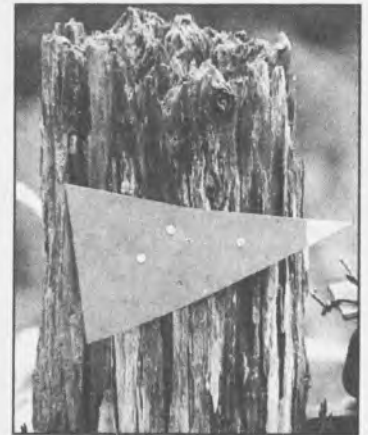
and the Rideau Trail grew. The orange triangle trail markers became familiar and comforting hike companions.

When the confines of big city living get a bit too claustrophobic, escape is not far away. The slow pace of walking and the nature of the trail force a new perspective. Routine pressures pale in comparison to a steep hill to be climbed at the end of a long and tiring day.

Looking through the guide book, I see places names such as The Circus, Mica Mines or the Ghost Town of Opinicon Lake. Warnings such as "Caution in crossing the Dam. The surface is slippery." can be interpreted as challenges.

An inventory of life's essentials is made. Food and water are portioned out. Equipment is checked and stuffed into a backpack.

All that is left is an early-morning drive down an unexplored back road in search of orange triangles.





FAMILIAR: Orange triangle trail markers are comforting hiking companions

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