



**RIDEAU TRAIL**  
ASSOCIATION

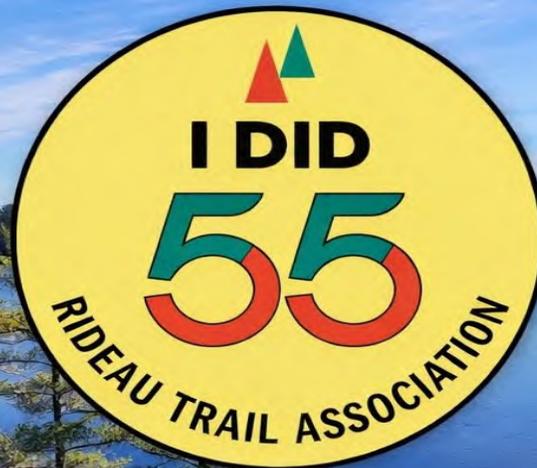


NEWSLETTER

Spring 2026

Issue No. 219

*55th Anniversary of the*  
**RIDEAU TRAIL ASSOCIATION**



**1971–2026**

*Come hike with us*

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION**

**[HTTPS://WWW.RIDEAUTRAIL.ORG/RIDEAU-TRAIL-55TH-ANNIVERSARY-BADGES/](https://www.rideautrail.org/rideau-trail-55th-anniversary-badges/)**



### Rideau Canal Historical Presentation

If the RTA's Locks Endeavour has whetted your appetite, or you're just curious to know more, the Ottawa Historical Society will be hosting a presentation on the history of the Rideau Canal. The free meeting will be held at the main branch of the Ottawa Public Library Saturday March 28th at 1:30pm. If you're not able to make it, speaker Alison Margot Smith has also posted her short film "Two Wars, Three Watersheds, a Slew of Surveys and a Canal" to [YouTube](#).

For more information visit the [Ottawa Historical Society](#) page for this event.

## experience The East Coast Trail with Brown Rabbit Walkabout

Hike 250 kms of beautiful coastal trails on the Avalon Peninsula in Newfoundland with our help.

We provide transportation from & to St. John's Airport, and from trail heads, and three meals a day with accommodations.

For prices and information contact Isa.



Phone: 1-709- 334-2208

Fax: 1-709- 334-3601

email: [brownrabbitcabins@nf.aibn.com](mailto:brownrabbitcabins@nf.aibn.com)

[www.brownrabbit.nl.ca](http://www.brownrabbit.nl.ca)



NEWLY RENOVATED

# DINE.STAY.ENJOY.

Book now. 613-273-3636 or [coveinn.com](http://coveinn.com)





P.O. Box 15 Kingston ON K7L 4V6  
www.rideautrail.org

**Electronic Mail:** [info@rideautrail.org](mailto:info@rideautrail.org)  
**Webmaster:** [web@rideautrail.org](mailto:web@rideautrail.org)

**Kingston:** [kingston@rideautrail.org](mailto:kingston@rideautrail.org)  
**Central:** [central@rideautrail.org](mailto:central@rideautrail.org)  
**Ottawa:** [ottawa@rideautrail.org](mailto:ottawa@rideautrail.org)

The RTA does not share its mailing list with other organizations.  
The Rideau Trail Newsletter is published quarterly in March, June, September and December by The Rideau Trail Association, a not-for-profit, charitable corporation. Unless otherwise stated, the opinions expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of The Rideau Trail Association.

© 2026 The Rideau Trail Association  
ISSN 0709-7085



<https://www.instagram.com/rideautrail/?hl=en>

<https://www.facebook.com/rideautrail>



**Next Newsletter: *Deadline May 1st, 2026***

We want your submissions! If possible, text should be sent electronically with no document formatting. Pictures with good definition and contrast are most welcome.

**Send material directly to the Editor:** [newsletter@rideautrail.org](mailto:newsletter@rideautrail.org)

### Directors

(Chair) Rusty Bassarab, Mary Carlson, Randy Goodfellow, Hua Lei, Susan Long-Poucher, Jim Moss, and Alan Smith.  
Margaret MacSween (Kingston Club Rep.),  
Dorothy Hudson (Central Club Rep.),  
Alan Johnson (Ottawa Club Rep.)

### RTA Officers

President: Rusty Bassarab; [president@rideautrail.org](mailto:president@rideautrail.org)  
Vice President: **\*VACANT\***  
Treasurer: Hua Lei; [treasurer@rideautrail.org](mailto:treasurer@rideautrail.org)  
Secretary: Eileen McNally; [secretary@rideautrail.org](mailto:secretary@rideautrail.org)  
Membership: Adriana Faria, [membership@rideautrail.org](mailto:membership@rideautrail.org)  
Activities Coordinator: Jim Moss; [activities@rideautrail.org](mailto:activities@rideautrail.org)  
Trail Coordinator: Alan Smith;  
[trailcoordinator@rideautrail.org](mailto:trailcoordinator@rideautrail.org)  
Marketing/Communications: Louise Langlais;  
[marketing@rideautrail.org](mailto:marketing@rideautrail.org)

### Club Chairs

Kingston Club Chair: Jim Moss,  
[kingstonchair@rideautrail.org](mailto:kingstonchair@rideautrail.org)  
Central Club Chair: Dorothy Hudson;  
[central.chair@rideautrail.org](mailto:central.chair@rideautrail.org)  
Ottawa Club Chair: Alan Johnson;  
[ottawachair@rideautrail.org](mailto:ottawachair@rideautrail.org)

**Newsletter Editor:** Peter Weir, Ottawa  
[newsletter@rideautrail.org](mailto:newsletter@rideautrail.org)

**IT Coordinator:** Ruth Oswald; [it\\_coordinator@rideautrail.org](mailto:it_coordinator@rideautrail.org)

**Awards Coordinator:** Janice Coghill [awards@rideautrail.org](mailto:awards@rideautrail.org)

### Kingston Club Executive

Chair: Jim Moss  
Vice Chair: Margaret MacSween  
Past Chair: **\* VACANT \***  
Secretary: Lynn Esau  
Treasurer: Laura Quesnel  
Membership Coordinator: Monica Hilton  
Landowner Liaison: Andy Glazin  
Construction: James Lorimer  
Maintenance: Stan Huff  
Communications and Publicity: Louise Langlais  
Outings Coordinators: Karin McInnis and Louise Langlais  
Wednesday Walks Coordinator:  
Jennifer Brinkman  
Special Events: Sue Lansing  
Members at Large: Rusty Bassarab, Karen Toon and Emily Hammond

### Central Club Executive

Chair / Rep. to Board: Dorothy Hudson  
Vice-Chair: Bill Ottney  
Past Chair: Herman Doornbos  
Secretary: Mary Robinson  
Treasurer: Joyce Davis  
Trail Maintenance: Dave Skinner  
Hike Leader Coordinator: Pat Stranberg  
Landowner Liaison: Craig McManus  
Events Coordinator: Jennifer Cakir  
Communications: Linda Hachmer  
Member at large: Annette Lebrun, Tania Mason, Meg Taylor Picard

### Ottawa Club Executive (613) 860-2225

Chair: Alan Johnson  
Vice Chair: Melodie Mortensen  
Past Chair: Peter Weir  
Secretary: Denise Hall  
Treasurer: Robert Smith  
Trail Maintenance: Ian Campbell  
Landowner Liaison: Roger Reens  
Gatineau Park Liaison: Bridget Daley  
Activities Coordinators: Ingrid Monasterios and Carol Seal  
Publicity and Communications: Kevin Chapman  
Member at Large: Brian Grant  
eNewsletter Editor: Peter Weir

## Member Services (Who gets your question?)

Whatever the question, just contact the RTA for info on your club at email: [info@RideauTrail.org](mailto:info@RideauTrail.org)

### Address Changes / Paper Newsletter

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

[membership@Rideautrail.org](mailto: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](mailto:awards@rideautrail.org)

Rideau Trail Secretary

### Kingston Club

[jkbrinkman59@gmail.com](mailto:jkbrinkman59@gmail.com)

Jennifer Brinkman,  
Kingston Club Volunteer

### Central Club

[hmrob@storm.ca](mailto:hmrob@storm.ca)

Mary Robinson,  
Central Club Secretary

### Ottawa Club

[ottawasecretary@rideautrail.org](mailto: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.

### 55th anniversary Challenges and badges:

<https://www.rideautrail.org/rideautrail-55th-anniversary-badges/>



# News and Notes from the Clubs - Spring 2026

## 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](mailto:central@rideautrail.org)

**Activities:** [activities.central@rideautrail.org](mailto: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

- Blue Trails in Winter
- My Favourite Hike 55km over Two Days
- Frontenac Perimeter Challenge
- Victoria Day Weekend in Pennsylvania
- AGM

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](mailto:ottawa@rideautrail.org)

**Activities:** [ottawa.activities@rideautrail.org](mailto: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
- Blue Trails in Winter
- My Favourite Hike 55km over Two Days
- Frontenac Perimeter Challenge
- Victoria Day Weekend in Pennsylvania
- AGM

### 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](mailto:lou_daybreak@hotmail.com)

Wednesday Walkers: impromptu level 2 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](mailto:kingston@rideautrail.org)

- Volunteer Appreciation
- AGM
- Kingston Clean Up
- Bowling,
- Games Night
- Monthly Socials

## 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
- 55km over Two Days
- Frontenac Perimeter Challenge
- Victoria Day Weekend in Pennsylvania

### 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](mailto: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 55<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting Saturday, May 16, 2026

The Rideau Trail Association Annual General Meeting for 2026, will be held at the Smiths Falls Golf and Country Club, 125 Golf Club Road, Smiths Falls:

- Registration will start at 8:00 AM – coffee/tea/snacks will be served.
- The business meeting will commence at 9:00 AM.
- A buffet style lunch will be served from 1:00 PM to 2pm.
- Please sign up via the RTA Activity Calendar (if you are unsure how to use the Calendar, please get help from a friend or from one of your Club Executives.
- full attendance, including lunch costs \$25 per person. Payment can be sent by etransfer to the Ottawa Treasurer, [r.w.smith2108@gmail.com](mailto:r.w.smith2108@gmail.com), or by check mailed to 1179 Albany Drive, Ottawa, ON, K2C 2L1 prior to April 24th.
- There will be a limited number of lunches available for purchase on the day.
- It is possible to register for the AGM only (no cost). After registration, please email Melodie Mortensen at [melodiemortensen@gmail.com](mailto:melodiemortensen@gmail.com) to confirm that you will be attending the AGM only.
- Expect to receive your formal Notice of Meeting on Mar 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Joseph Bennett Professor at Carleton University will be our guest speaker and will speak to us regarding his interests and research in the control and management of invasive species and management to protect threatened species.



## Sydenham Snow Social

On the 25th Jan the RTA set up at the Sydenham Snow Social in Sydenham Ontario. Laura Quesnell and Andy Glazin (in the Picture) were attending the table for the club.

Despite a limited turnout there were about 6 people who took away the website info and stated that they wish to look into further. Many people at least found out what the RTA is and the Rideau Trail Association branded 3D printed whistles, knife and fork, and tick removal devices were popular giveaways, especially with the kids.



Photo Rusty Bassarab

## RTA turns 55!

There are 4 ways to earn your 'I DID 55' Badge

1. Complete 55 hikes in 2026 on RTA Trails (Orange or Blue). Targeted at people who do hiking weekly for shorter distances.  
**For a Log Sheet visit Member Hub on [website](#).**

2. Hike 55 km in each of the three sectors in 2026. Targeted at people who do longer hikes across the RTA Network.  
**For a Log Sheet for recording your hikes visit the Members Hub on [website](#).**

3. Complete two specified hikes in two days in 2026. There are three possible hikes, each around 27.5km long. Hike two of them for a total of 55km. Must be done in two days. Targeted at those who like long hikes! The three hikes are:

- Perth to Lally Homestead (Perth Town Center Parking to 9B)
- Lally Homestead to Westport Trailhead (9B to 7D)
- Westport Trailhead to Chaffey's Locks (7D to Chaffey's Locks Parking)

**For a Log Sheet for recording your two hikes visit Member Hub on [website](#).**

4. Visit/Do/Find 55 things along the Rideau Trails. Targeted at those who want to explore the wide variety of interesting and fun things along the Trail. The Log Sheet has a List of about 150 things to Visit/Do/Find all along the network of RTA Trails.

Complete any combination of 55 from the List, and get your Badge

Note that this badge option will be ongoing beyond 2026 until all the Badges are gone. Hence why there is no mention of 55 years on the Badge.

**For the list of the 150 things, plus a Log Sheet for recording your 55 items, visit Member Hub on [website](#).**



## Lead a series of shorter hikes? Yes we did!

Back in May 2025, the idea of leading a series of shorter hikes had never before been on my “must do” list. Although my pace has slowed with age, I can still long-haul on the trail and that has always been my preference. But leading shorter hikes is exactly what transpired for a number of us from RTA Kingston and Central Clubs last year.

So, a backstory is called for here: On April 27, I was scheduled to lead a 15.5 km RTA-Kingston hike as part of the E2E 2025 series from 06A Bonwill (former Skycroft) Access to 06D Bedford Mills. While we were waiting for the other members of our group to arrive, Karin McInnis was able to enlighten me on a situation with a new RTA Member whose pace was not in keeping with that of the group. The Bucket List goal for this hiker was to complete her End to End from Kingston to Ottawa. Following RTA personal privacy protocols Karin contacted the hiker in question to seek permission for me to contact her directly.



*Jennifer, Dorothy, Robert, and Janice on the Cat*



*Dorothy, Jennifer and Janice near Upper Rock Lake*

As fate would have it, I did not lead that April 27 hike. After I had met with Karin and had shuttled

the group to Bonwill access, I headed to Perth to spend an enjoyable 6 hours in Emerg waiting to be assessed for Stage 2 Lyme. First time for everything, excepting the visit to Emerg. I am a pro at self-inflicted DIY wounds.



*Jennifer, Karin, and Janice hiking across Frontenac*

And from there, it all started. Our new Bucket List hiker, Jennifer Smith-Rider had suffered a debilitating stroke a number of years prior, and as a returning hiker she possessed neither the speed nor the stamina to participate in a longer hike at the pace of other hikers. Hey! We all have to start somewhere. So, on May 5th, our first hike together, Jennifer and I soloed from Bedford Mills to her home just outside Westport. In fact, the Rideau Trail passes directly in front of Jennifer and Drew's unique home. So their barn-home became the end-point for this first 9km hike with Jennifer.

And thus began the E2E Lite Series of hikes, which would not have happened at all were it not for the planning and cooperation which took place with Karin McInnis and Janice Coghill. Karin and Janice put together a plan to cross Frontenac PP while I hiked in to Flagpole hill and doubled back out to serve as shuttle driver so that Karin and Janice would have a ride back to their car at the park office while Jennifer rode home with her partner Drew.



*Karin, Jennifer and Janice at South Slide Jct.*

Continued from previous Page...

I have been hiking the Rideau Trail since 2003 and had never considered planning hikes in shorter segments. For example, the standard hike from Waypoint 05D Maple Leaf Road was always the 18 km section to Waypoint 08A Bonwill. Splitting this into two hikes of approximately 9km each made for two really enjoyable treks. The terrain is rugged and beautiful and the less-hurried pace gave our group ample time to enjoy these beautiful slices of Canadian Shield. In fact, these two hikes fall into the “gem” category and will be posted again in Spring 2026.



*Dorothy, Jennifer, Pat, and Bert at the Mica Mines Wolf Tree*

After the final Kingston sector hike with Jennifer on June 27, the good folks from Central Club, under the auspices of Pat Stranberg, took over the Fall series through Central Sector which we completed on November 5. I was able to join many of these hikes and ended up leading a number of these hikes as well.

The maximum turnout we had on any of the E2E Lite hikes was six participants, including the leaders. From the perspective of those of us who devoted our volunteer time to planning and leading shorter hikes at a gentler pace, we had expected a more significant level of participation from RTA members. In fact, a common RTA Member Survey response from a significant number of our members has been a desire to see us offer more hikes which are shorter in length. So, what exactly are we missing here?

From a personal perspective, I met three new RTA members on these hikes, and thoroughly enjoyed the entire experience. I also had a number of very positive takeaways from the “trail patter” on these hikes. My standard hiking lunch was always been either peanut butter or cheese and onion sandwiches. Janice, why did I never ever think of egg salad until we hiked together? Egg salad sandwiches are now my mainstay. And it turned out that our garden full of rhubarb did not go to waste after I followed Jennifer’s instructions on pie-baking. And my first-ever pies turned out amazingly well.



*Janice and Jennifer at Foley Mountain*

And I will also speak from a volunteer perspective; having served as a Big Brother, a property chair for a couple churches, restorer of a derelict diesel locomotive at a local museum, held numerous RTA Executive/Board positions, trail maintainer, and hike leader. Without question, for many reasons the E2E Lite series with Jennifer and our regulars has been singularly the best volunteer experience to date.



*Bill, Jennifer, Pat, and Annette on the final Central leg along Matheson Drive.*

Continued from previous Page...

So folks, in Spring 2026 the E2E Lite series will continue through Ottawa Sector. If you asked for shorter hikes, will you consider joining the Ottawa group or perhaps even leading a hike or two? Maybe I can get an on-the-trail knitting tutorial this time around.

Bill Ottney

Hike Leader RTA Kingston and Central

Vice Chair RTA Central

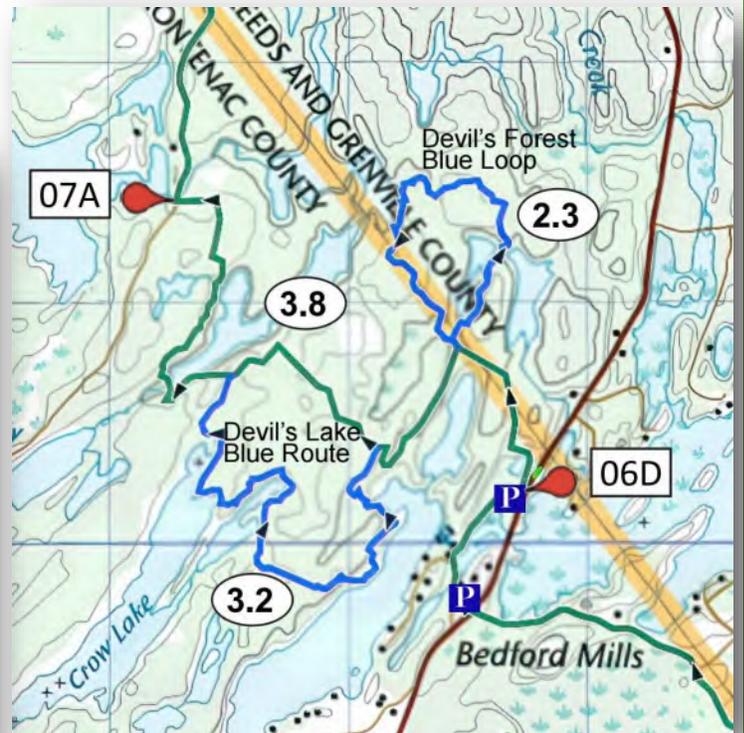
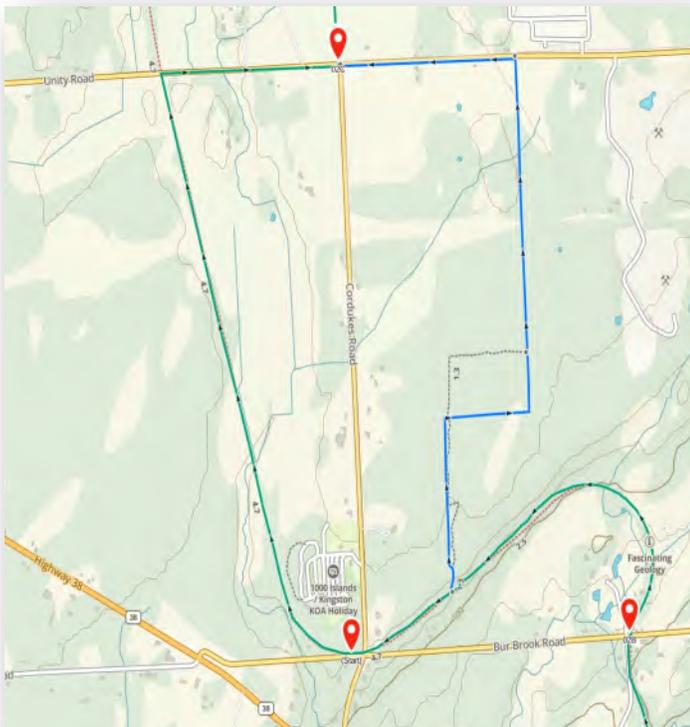


Bill and Jennifer

### Trail Alerts and Reroutes

Due to repeated (post-construction) flooding of the trail between 2B and 2C, the main trail has been diverted to the K&P and Unity Rd. The original trail section has been marked as a blue route, but trail users should note that this blue trail is difficult to use in wet conditions. Map 2 has been updated.

combined with Devils Lake Blue Route, which was added in 2024, to make an interesting 10km looped outing. Map 6 has been updated.



A second Blue Loop has been added at Bedford Mills. Devils Forest Blue Loop is 2.3 kms and visits a couple of small lakes. This can easily be

Map 5 and 6 were updated to reflect minor changes to the main trail east of skycroft

Allan Smith

Director & Trail Coordinator Rideau Trail

Association Inc. [trailcoordinator@rideautrail.org](mailto:trailcoordinator@rideautrail.org)

## The Environment Corner

By Alan Smith

As we start 2026, I look back on the achievements that we have made over the last year. We have improved our general awareness of the issues with invasive plants, added 17 boot brush stations to our network to help prevent the spread of seeds, and our efforts are starting to be recognized by the CRCA, RVCA and other like-minded organizations.

This year I am hoping that we can move to the next stage and focus on understanding and mapping the invasive plants on our trail network. This will add to the collective knowledge of those organizations working to control invasive plants in our region and hopefully allow us to identify infestations before they become major issues. To that end, I am looking for a group of interested members, who are willing to help record invasive plants during hikes. This will not be a burdensome task, as the group will be able to report invasive plants during their regular hikes, and I will provide group training on the use of the reporting apps. Please let me know if you are interested in helping by emailing me at [Trailcoordinator@rideautrail.org](mailto:Trailcoordinator@rideautrail.org) and I will be able to provide more information.

As we expand our efforts with invasive plants, I am extremely happy that Susan O'Connor has kindly volunteered to assist with our agenda, by overseeing our efforts in the northern half of the trail and acting as the liaison to the Rideau Valley Phragmites Management Working Group.

In this edition, I would like to focus on the non-native honeysuckles that are crowding out the understory across the region, and Black Locust, an invasive tree that spreads rapidly.

Second only to Buckthorn, invasive honeysuckles are the most prolific invasive understory shrubs in Ontario. They are notable for their thick scrubby growth, dense leaves from early spring to late fall, many flowers in the summer and red berries that can last through the winter. There are 4 main types found here: Amur (white/yellow), Tartarian (dark pink), Morrow (white/pink), and Bells (pink). Note that the branches of invasive honeysuckles are either hollow or contain a white pith; this is a good distinguishing feature from the far less common native honeysuckles which are brown inside. Invasive honeysuckles form dense thickets that both shade out native plants and release a chemical that inhibits the growth of other plants. This decreases the diversity of habitat areas and negatively impacts the wildlife it supports.

The Black Locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) is a fast growing tree that is native to the Appalachians and has been widely farmed for fence posts and mine timbers due to its rot resistance. You will often see it growing in

Ontario along roadsides and vacant lots, where its nitrogen fixing and suckering nature means that it forms dense clumps that out compete native plants. It is recognizable for its dramatic flower display in May/June, which also unfortunately attracts pollinators away from native plants.

For more details about plants that are invasive to Ontario and best practice management guides you are recommended to visit [www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca](http://www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca).



*Buckthorn*



*The Black Locust*

## THE TOWN OF LAKE OPINICON: GHOST TOWN ON THE RIDEAU

(a reprint from RTA Newsletter 1972)

Between Chaffey's Lock, and the village of Perth Road, we pass through an area marked on the maps (the old ones) as Lake Opinicon. How do we recognize this little town?

Travelling by car, along the dirt road, we can see only an old cemetery, a barn, and an unused schoolhouse, as evidence of the site. Travelling by the Rideau Trail, on foot, there is even less evidence of a town, but the knowing eye can spot an old house foundation here and there, or may find a gateway in a fence, where there seems no reason for a gateway to exist.

One old deed we know dates the land grant to which it pertains at 1837, when the royal grant from Queen Victoria deeded it to Annie Fluke. When the settlers came, there were two means of making a livelihood from the land open to them; mining, and lumbering. Fur-trapping, of course, had also been going on for a long time, but this fluctuated according to weather and the season. The Fluke family were interested in mining; to this day we can see old test-holes and quarries when they sought mica and other saleable commodities.

As they gradually cut off the red and white pine, they opened up the level areas, old glacial deposits, and the bottoms of ancient beaver ponds, for fields. The old pond bottoms were apt to be clay, or muck, rich and fertile, though often in need of added humus to make good farmland. The sandy glacial deposits were apt to be a much lighter soil, much less fertile, and also in need of humus. Farming was never a truly successful venture, for markets were distant, cattle required a great deal of care, and except for the help which the settlers gave one another, labour was non-existent. However, as a subsistence farming, they did very well, for needs were few, and most needs could be met by a man with his own two hands and a few tools, and a pair of horses.

There were many sawmills; two in this area were at the head of the lake, near Darling's farm, and on Steam Mill Point, at Skycroft. This steam-operated mill was gone before 1875; there is a possibility that the steam boiler at the old worked out phosphates mine, near the junction of the Old Bedford Road and the railroad may have been the actual boiler from the steam mill at Steam Mill Point.

Following the trail westward from the Old Bedford Road, we come after a bit to a big spring, the headwaters of Jerden Creek. Adjacent to the trail, just east of the spring, are the barely-seen foundations of an old building, probably a barn. On higher land, to the south, an old cellar hole marks the spot where the boarding house for the phosphate mine stood. A 22-room boarding house was here, to house the miners. Why did they put the house on this hill? If *you* could see this area when the winter snows start to melt, *you* would know, without asking why they chose such a high site! The whole field below is sometimes filled with water.

If you look downstream a bit, you come to a cave; a limestone one, worn away by old floodwaters. The stream stops short, just before you reach the cave - where does the water go? Look closely, and you will see a hole, down which the stream gurgles, much like the outlet pipe for a bathtub. Listen, and you can hear the sound of water falling, far below. In this limestone country, there are water-made caves everywhere, many in several levels as this one is. This is the old Nicholls Ranch, later called the Austen Ranch; this is approximately the center of the ghost town of Lake Opinicon. As we follow the trail continuously westward, we pass old house foundations, at the edge of Lindsay Lake. Much of this rock is made of sandstone, quarried at a local quarry, over beyond Warner Lake. What happened to the town? Time, and changing markets, careless use of the natural economic resource, the red and white pine, followed by migration to areas where a living was easier to get - these have changed Lake Opinicon from a town populated by farmers to an area where summer visitors, wildlife, and one going farm form the population. There were three economic waves: mining, lumbering, cheese-making. The final, and fourth is a boom in waterfront property, bringing in summer residents.

Back before present medical knowledge, a child from this school went to visit a grandparent, over the Christmas holidays. After returning to school, she became ill. It was diphtheria - and it swept the school and the community, doctorless, and probably snowed in in the midst of winter. There are many graves, small ones, in the cemetery, as a result. This may have been the deathblow to the town, as a populated town. Once, there were SO children in this school. Now, there are the children of one family, only, to attend school - they must be transported to Elgin.

Continued from previous Page...

How different might the history of this community have been, if instead of clearing the land, each lumberman had replanted a pine for each one that was cut? A stable, sparsely populated town could have resulted, with a healthy future, a firm economic base, and a scattered but steady population.

It is useless, of course to decry "might-have-beens", but we must examine history and former land-use with the thought, "What should WE do, so that 150 years from now, those who follow us will cry, 'Bravo' at our actions?"

The few spots where natural pine regeneration has taken place give a suggested course to follow: Plant! Plant trees, of assorted kinds, to rebuild watersheds and permit the complex web of life to develop. At Skycroft, we try to use this ghost-town of Lake Opinicon as a teaching device, to lead others into an understanding and appreciation of man's task for the future - to so build a better world that pollution and erosion, hunger and want need not occur.

To this end, we support such ventures as the Rideau Trail, that leads others into a better and closer way of looking at the land. Hopefully, the guide book, now in the making, will augment the work of the various Conservation Authorities, and be a teaching tool for all who use it.

A farmer we knew, some 50 years ago, used to say, "You take care of the land, - and the land will take care of you". This land ethic is one that should be adopted today by everyone - not by the farmer alone.

Allan and Ellen Bonwill

### Postscript:

The Bonwills were the original founders of Skycroft campground. They also donated a large section of land to Queen's University to use for biological research. The then President of the RTA, Dr Fred Cooke, would later (1986) win an Excellence in Research prize, for his research in Biology. Our blue loop connector from Skycroft is named after the Bonwills and the shelter with their name along our main trail still stands.



## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS TO THE RIDEAU TRAIL ASSOCIATION

### Central

Jo Bennett  
Natasha Sorokan  
Nonna Volodina  
Elaine Speck  
Doug Bruce  
Judy Bruce  
Kristine Martin  
Victoria Ramsvik

Roger Godard  
Brenda Piazza  
Deborah Dowker  
Jim Bates  
Christie Evans

### Ottawa

Ross Campbell  
Helen Roper  
Joanne Mitchell  
Roy Mitchell  
Cory Dignard  
Janet Sullivan  
Dave Pajot  
Robin Andrew  
Susan Greene  
Glendon Blackman  
Lorraine England  
Slavica Dragisic  
Elly Kaz  
Heather Braden

### Kingston

Fairleigh Seaton  
Marie Fjarlie  
Jody DiRocco  
Rosemary Mosco  
Samyogita Hardikar  
Lindsay Bourque  
Carole Letourneau  
Suzanne Arseneau  
Lisa Porter  
Mike Porter  
Gaby Rodriguez  
Karen Gregg  
Katharine Ashworth  
Kevin Brown  
John Reid

## 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>

## VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

As you all know, the RTA has no paid employees, and we depend upon volunteer efforts to keep us going. It is also understood that each member has a different amount of time, and different skillsets, available to donate to RTA (and other) volunteer situations and/or positions. The Association is doing its best to try to have volunteer efforts as flexible as possible/practical; as well as trying to reduce the associated workloads of specific volunteers (sharing of workload and positions is supported). If you have some time available, we appreciate you doing whatever you have time for. We all need to take care that volunteers are not overloaded, while we still pursue the reasons why the organization exists.

Below are some positions that either are currently not filled, or soon will be. Please take a read and see if you, alone or with other(s), could assist in filling the vacancy.

### Association Level Positions Activities Coordinator:

The Activities Coordinator is one of the key functional roles for daily RTA operations. The Activities Coordinator oversees all aspects of the “To promote, encourage and conduct hiking and similar self-propelled activities” portion of the RTA Mission at Association level, and leads the Activity Coordination Committee efforts. The Activities Coordinator should have experience as a Hike Leader, coordinating the efforts of others, and writing and reviewing policy and guideline documents.

The full job description for the Activities Coordinator is available on the Volunteer page of the RTA Website (<https://www.rideautrail.org/get-involved/volunteering/>), as is Terms of Reference file for the Activities Committee.

For more complete information concerning what is involved please contact Jim Moss, email [jim.moss@rideautrail.org](mailto:jim.moss@rideautrail.org)

### Director:

The Association is looking for one or two new people to stand for election and serve as Directors on the Board next year. The Board sets and oversees Association policies and protects the long-term health of the Association. Board meetings

take place quarterly, plus committee and other special meetings. For more complete information, including the Job Description and/or Application Form, please contact Rusty Bassarab, email – [president@rideautrail.org](mailto:president@rideautrail.org)

### Vice President:

The Vice President oversees the administrative support aspects of Association daily activities – including financial, membership, and all other types of administrative support to RTA Clubs and Committees. This position requires a detailed knowledge of RTA operations. Taking on the Vice President role does not commit the individual to any future RTA position, but it will certainly develop leadership and coordination skills. For more information, please contact Rusty Bassarab, email – [president@rideautrail.org](mailto:president@rideautrail.org)

### Association Level Landowner Liaison:

There is currently no one at Association level who looks specifically at the issues associated with landowner liaison, even though there is such a person in each club. It is a secondary responsibility of the Trail Coordinator, which is already a full-time position. The preference is to establish an Association level Landowner Liaison individual to assist the Trail Coordinator by being responsible for the policy and coordination efforts for Landowner Liaison across the Association. For more information contact Alan Smith, email: [trailcoordinator@rideautrail.org](mailto:trailcoordinator@rideautrail.org)

### Club Level Positions

Volunteers are required to assist as part of Club Executives for a range of positions. In addition, Clubs are looking for volunteers to help with various aspects of trail maintenance, either on a regular basis or just for some specific assistance when available. Please help by doing what you can. Contact your Club Chair, or Executive member for more information.



# RIDEAU TRAIL ASSOCIATION 55: History Corner

## Last marker nailed on Rideau Trail

WESTPORT (Staff) — The astronauts found from their moon walk that the most precious things on this universe were the living things, Jack Davis, federal minister of the environment, told more than 300 people here Sunday while officially opening the 150-mile long Rideau nature walking trail.

The opening ceremonies couldn't have been blessed more appropriately by Mother Nature. A light fall of snow coupled with a cold but bright day greeted the visitors as they watched the opening ceremonies on a 400-acre tract of land on Foley Mountain, overlooking this picturesque village and the Rideau lakes.

While opening the trail, which only took five months to complete instead of an anticipated five years, the minister noted city people today are caught up in technology and young people want to see and know nature.

Ontario Works Minister James Auld assisted in the opening along with Howard Henry of Ottawa, chairman of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority, and Dr. Fred Cooke of Kingston, president of the Rideau Trail Association.

All four men took part in nailing the last trail marker, an orange triangle, onto a giant oak tree and then led the guests on a short hike along the trail.

Mr. Henry told The Journal another 200 acres would soon be added to the 400-acre Foley Mountain Conservation Area and within four years the area will be expanded to 1,000 acres.

About 65 per cent of the Ottawa to Kingston trail lies within the jurisdiction of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority area.

Dr. Cooke who spearheaded a move to have the trail built noted the association was formed last May and the trail completed in five months.

He paid tribute to students who worked along the trail under Opportunities for Youth grants and to Pat MacManus of Portland, who had much to do with the trail development in the centre of the two regions.

### THE EXECUTIVE

President Fred Cooke  
 Kingston V.P. Guy Thorne  
 Ottawa V.P. Rolly Hamilton  
 Smith's Falls V.P. Gordon Higginson  
 Secretary Anne Hutchinson  
 Treasurer Doug Knapp

### Committee Chairmen

Finance & Legal Joe DEwhurst  
 Ottawa, Routes Ray Billingham  
 Kingston, Routes Dick Henriksen  
 OTTAWA, Publicity Bill Holland  
 Kingston, Publicity Dolf Harmsen  
 Design Alden Strong



1971  
 OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE  
 RIDEAU TRAIL  
 FOLEY MT. CONSERVATION AREA



### Kingston's Trail for All Seasons 2024/2025,

Set #1 (fall, winter, spring, summer) taken at Elbow Lake Environmental Education Centre. Karin McInnis



[What3words: ///extraneous.skiing.battery](#)





PM40022816

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:  
RIDEAU TRAIL ASSOCIATION  
PO BOX 15  
KINGSTON ON K7L 4V6

## Kingston's Trail for All Seasons 2024/2025

Continued from previous page

Set #2 (fall, winter, spring, summer) also taken at Elbow Lake Environmental Education Centre.

Karin McInnis



**Comfortable Hiking Holidays**  
Hike an adventure. Rest in comfort.

---

**AMALFI COAST**

**October 12 to 24, 2026**

- ✓ Sorrento, Positano, Amalfi & Capri
- ✓ Stunning hikes & sapphire blue waters
- ✓ Restaurants hand-picked just for you
- ✓ 4-star accommodations
- ✓ Led by our own Canadian-Italian hike leader, intimately familiar with the hikes & the best gelato spots



**www.letshike.com**

TICO #50023501 & #50023502

*To walk in nature is to witness a thousand miracles....Mary Davis*

*A walk in nature walks the soul back home.....Mary Davis*

Front cover picture taken by Sue Goff on Little slide...the Picture assembled by AI using ChatGPT