



Bruce Trail  
CONSERVANCY  
BEAVER VALLEY CLUB

# BEAVER TALES

Fall  
2023

The Newsletter of the Beaver Valley Bruce Trail Club

Box 3251 Meaford Ontario N4L 1A5 / [www.beavervalleybruceclub.org](http://www.beavervalleybruceclub.org)



Happy 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday to Us!  
Sept. 1963 – Sept. 2023

***Yes, our Club turned 60 years old this fall, older than the Bruce Trail Association (later Conservancy) itself, which was formed as an association of the Clubs a year after our Club was created.***

Keith Solomon, an avid local (and international) hiker, was the driving force in establishing the “hiker’s dream” in the Beaver Valley. The work involved choosing the best route and of course organizing the volunteers needed to create a trail from Blantyre to the Blue Mountains above Craighleith. By July of 1963, BV Club volunteers had secured permissions for crossing the land, including 12 private landowners’ permissions, and had cut 42 miles of trail, “but none blazed.”

Does this strike a familiar note?: It took only until a little later that same year that the trailblazers realized they needed a whole lot more volunteers than their existing cadre (“23 families”) in order to keep the trail cut! Thus it was that an appeal to the general public was made, leading to the historic **September 1963** meeting in which a Beaver Valley Club was formally created, with significantly more volunteers.

By September **1965**, the Club was able to report that only two more miles of trail remained to be created in our Section. Our Archives contain a delightful letter from Peter Solomon, apologizing for missing the last meeting of the BTA Board, but stating in explanation that a meeting down in the smoke was no match for the lure of cutting more trail. ❤️

Solomon pulled together the 1st Edition of the *Bruce Trail Guide*. In **1966**, our Club was the first outside the Toronto-Hamilton area to host an AGM, as they were called then. The \$3.50 entry fee covered a Thanksgiving buffet, speaker, campfire, singsong, late coffee, camping on premises, use of the then-Talisman chalet dormitory, Sunday lunch and a choice of four hikes.

Our Club has hosted an in-person BTA/BTC Annual Meeting three times since then, last in 2002. The **2002 BTA AGM**, attended by 214 BTC members, had a very different format back then. The next edition of *Bruce Trail Magazine* described the festive two and a half-day 2002 event, with a three-hour business meeting in the middle.

After the Friday night wine and cheese social, our local Club President, Fred Young, chaired the opening, thanking the local organizing committee and then introducing a speech “of gratitude and reverence” from our Club’s outgoing President, Richard Boehnke. There followed a BTA Treasurer’s report, a BTA report on donations, land acquisitions, membership and trail maintenance, a report from each of the other Clubs, a “spirited, as usual” debate on *By-Law* amendments, the election of Directors to the 25-member “BTA Board,” lunch, and then a series of workshops and outings, a “sumptuous buffet dinner,” a speech by Margaret Solomon, the awards presentation, and a final speech about John Muir. On Sunday, more hikes and trophies.

Now here we are, 21 years later, with over 120 kilometers of Main Trail and over 35 kilometers of Side Trail, a horde of extra functions besides getting permissions and keeping that trail cut, and a virtual Annual Meeting via Zoom. Modern times. This issue is dedicated to all the past, present and future volunteers of the Beaver Valley. Thank you.

# Beaver Valley Bruce Trail Club

## Officers and Key Support Volunteers

### Fall Hikes 2023

To register for a hike anywhere on the Bruce Trail, go to <https://hikes.brucetrail.org/>

#### **Board of Directors and Key Support Volunteers**

**President:** Joan Nuffield  
**Vice President:** Vacant  
**Past President:** Jill Smith-Brodie  
**Secretary:** Kim Fisher  
**Treasurer:** Alan McPherson  
**Trail Activities:** Vacant  
**Trail Maintenance and Development:** Bob Hann  
**Volunteers and Membership:** Joan Nuffield  
**Land Stewardship:** Jamie Ufton  
**Information Services:** Marg Parkin and Cam Rzakki  
**Communications:** Jane Mei  
**BTC Representative:** Nadia Bubyk  
**Zone Leaders:** Neil McFadgen, John Burton, Cliff Kachaluba  
**Chainsaw Crew Leader:** Blain Horsley  
**Rider-Mower Grass Cutting Crew Leader:** Peter Bryce  
**Invasive Species Managers:** Bob Hann and Joan Nuffield  
**Webmaster:** Irena Marinko  
**Newsletter Editor:** Joan Nuffield

Please feel free to contact any Board officer or other volunteer via [info@beavervalleybrucetrail.org](mailto:info@beavervalleybrucetrail.org).



**Emergency contact:** For trees down on the Trail, etc., contact Blain Horsley at [info@beavervalleybrucetrail.org](mailto:info@beavervalleybrucetrail.org), sending location, tree size, and a photo if possible. For assistance with grass cutting on a section of Trail that is accessible by a rider-mower, contact Peter Bryce, and to report any other problem with Trail maintenance, please contact Bob Hann.

**Volunteers:** Like many volunteer organizations, the Beaver Valley Bruce Trail Club is always looking for interested people to serve on the Board, on the Trail, or in other capacities. If you would like to help out, please contact us at [info@beavervalleybrucetrail.org](mailto:info@beavervalleybrucetrail.org).

**Newsletter Submissions:** Are you a hiking addict, a local history buff, a budding auteur, an amateur geologist or naturalist? We would love to print any articles, photos or stories that you send us. Deadline for submissions, Winter Issue: November 15, 2023. Send to Editor of "Beaver Tales" at [info@beavervalleybrucetrail.org](mailto:info@beavervalleybrucetrail.org).

**Get "Beaver Tales" – Electronically:** In order for us to save trees and cut our "Beaver Tales" newsletter costs, we are asking members to sign up for it electronically. Please notify the Editor (or the BTC at [info@brucetrail.org](mailto:info@brucetrail.org)), if you want to switch to receiving the Newsletter electronically, and you will get a link to each new issue as it comes out. Thanks!

**Advertising in "Beaver Tales":** Ad rates for one year (3 issues): Business card size \$60; ¼ page \$120; ½ page \$180. Contact Steve Griffiths for advertising information at [info@beavervalleybrucetrail.org](mailto:info@beavervalleybrucetrail.org).

**The Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC):** Box 857, Hamilton, L8N 3N9 / 800-665-4453 / 905-529-6821 / Fax 905-529-6832 / [www.brucetrail.org](http://www.brucetrail.org) / [info@brucetrail.org](mailto:info@brucetrail.org). **MISSION STATEMENT:** Preserving a ribbon of wilderness, for everyone, forever.

"The future ain't what it used to be."

Yogi Berra

## President's Message – September 2023

by Joan Nuffield

Another amazing summer for our Club, with a kickoff celebration for the Hogg's Falls Miracle, and lots of "Holy \*\*\*\*, how did you *do* that??" from visitors there all season. And, after 11 years of annual "pick parties," (not the five to eight years we were told to expect!), we appear to have turned the corner on Garlic Mustard in the local areas we have attacked. (Gaia willing.) Our hiking events continue to be massively popular, and we are connecting and working with more and more people, local and otherwise.

All this we did while still hammering away at the thousand and one challenges that seem to be with us – our bridges and boardwalks being eroded by climate change, delays in getting permits from overworked agencies, equipment breaking down faster, areas needing to be cut twice as often, land development pressures, incursions on land we steward ... every delightful and time-consuming detail of it.

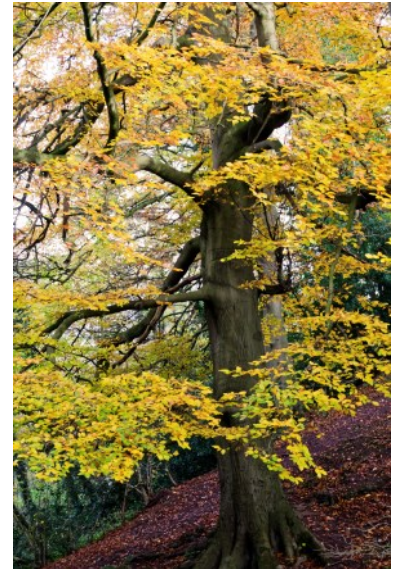
The other day I was reading about yet another reframing of the perennial discussion about what we, as humans, fundamentally need in order to thrive, from Maslow's "hierarchy of human needs," to Tony Robbins, to what are apparently dozens of different takes on how to define basic human needs. Any way you slice it or name it, though, two big ones always appear in these frameworks: *community* and *commitment*. People need to feel connection to a companionable group, and they need purpose, in whatever way they define those things for themselves. And, as yet another fantastic volunteer of ours rescued a hiker in distress after volunteering all weekend at an event she also organized (Glenda Collings, who else, assisted by a local landowner and some of her cronies), I was struck by how our work in the Beaver Valley serves these two big needs: for community and for commitment.

You meet the nicest people along and volunteering for the Bruce Trail, and you toil both to create an optimal hiking experience and to preserve and make a visible difference in this "ribbon of wilderness" that we are slowly but steadily piecing together. It sure ain't one of those jobs where you go home at the end of the day and wonder if you actually achieved anything!

**So this issue is dedicated to the volunteers and supporting members of the Beaver Valley Bruce Trail. You knock my socks off.**

And yet we need still more volunteers, as our work becomes more complex and challenging – and just plain *more*, as climate-based changes accelerate and increase. So, if you are unsure about the whole wonderful world of our volunteer work, large and small, this issue is your chance to find a gem (or another gem) of a job to do!

Please don't forget to "attend" the BTC's Annual Meeting via *Zoom* on Saturday morning, October 14.

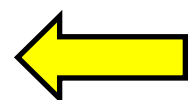
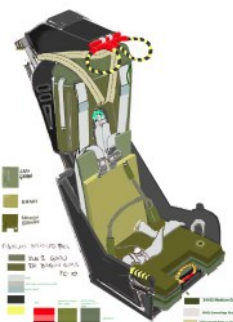


### Have you ever Been Dumped as a Volunteer?

We take great pride in maintaining the standards of our trail work. But would we actually dump a volunteer?

Anne Haley and Allen Avis found out this summer, as we were heading out on a work party to re-blaze the new Siegerman Main Trail. We loaded up all the stuff we needed into Bob Hann's ATV – paint, scrapers, brushes, boards, screws, screwdrivers, etc. Anne and Allen perched on the back of the ATV and off we went towards the worksite. Bob drove and I sat behind him.

Suddenly I felt a thump, and, looking back, I saw Anne and Allen sprawled on the weedy ground behind us, surrounded by all the detritus from the ATV. Bob had forgotten to lock the dumping mechanism on his ATV, and they had been unceremoniously ejected from the vehicle. Fortunately, they were both laughing and uninjured, and after a few anxious and apologetic moments, all of us were in stitches.



**New Prototype  
Volunteer Ejector-  
Seat**

# Volunteering for the Beaver Valley Bruce Trail Club

Do you thrill at the thought of clearing and maintaining trails in a forest or field? Do you love to hike with a group of like-minded folks? Do you dream of having “your own” little patch of paradise to walk, preserve and protect? Does building something (like a bridge, fence or boardwalk) in a beautiful place outside with a group of nice people sound like a great way to spend time? Are you such an avid hiker that you know all the local hot and cold spots? Do you love the idea of liberating wild violets from the clutches of an invasive species? Are you so conservation-minded that your friends call you “Greenpea”? You have come to the right place.

Volunteers and the work they do are the heart and soul of the Bruce Trail. In the Beaver Valley, over 200 of our 770 members are active volunteers. And yet, we are always looking for more! Below, we explain some of the many roles where we could use more help. Meantime, to contact us about volunteering, go to [beavervalleybrucetrail.org](http://beavervalleybrucetrail.org).

## Shadowing and Assisting

Not sure you want to do that volunteer work? Not sure what all it entails, how, when, etc? We are happy to accept tentative volunteers who need to know more before they commit! You can “shadow” a volunteer to see if that particular function or position is for you. Or spend a few hours with another volunteer who knows the job, to get the inside scoop, and then decide.

## Training

Signing up for certain activities automatically entitles the volunteer to any specialized training which is required for the job. For example, anyone who is thinking of volunteering for sawyering duty, but is worried about his/her skill level, will be scheduled in for a provincially-approved (and required!) training course, which the Club pays for. There is also a standard training package for aspiring hike leaders. On-the-job training can be scheduled on request.

New members may be asking themselves: but what do all those volunteers do? Or as a chatty dental hygienist once asked, “Oh yes, I love the Bruce Trail! But – what do you mean, you are really *busy* with it?” Gurgle.

*So without further ado – check out these dazzling opportunities:*

## Trail Development and Maintenance (TD&M)

Our club has a very energetic bunch of volunteers within the Beaver Valley Bruce Trail Club who seem to have a lot of fun working together—and have a reputation for doing an excellent job at developing and maintaining our trails.

TD&M has over 85 Trail Captains (TCs) and Assistant TCs, each of whom take the lead in ensuring the regular maintenance of one or more of our 69 individual main and side trail sections. Co-ordinating and supporting these TCs are the TD&M Director and Zone Leaders, one for all the TCs in one of each of three geographical groups of trails. Also supporting the TCs are a number of Standing Teams who help out with special situations: Chain Sawyers, Mechanized Grass Mowers, Whipper-Snipperers, and Trail Scouts. We also have a Construction Design Team, a Trail Design Team and a fairly large “Flying Squad”.

We are very fortunate to have a strong roster of volunteers, but as it happens, some specific positions are open:

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**Trail Captains:** Recent changes to our trail network and some retirements have created five openings for TCs

**Mowing Crew:** Members of the crew usually work in pairs, each pair taking the club's mower out 4 or 5 days per year and mowing parts of specific trails each time. To handle the growing workload, we would welcome volunteers who would either drive the mower or scout in front of the mower and at times whipper-snip short bits of trail.

**Whipper-Snipper Crew:** These volunteers may work in pairs, as with the mowing crew, or individually, using the club's gas or battery whipper-snippers to cut stretches of grass on specific trails 4 or 5 days a year. This crew is currently led by the Director, but he would be overjoyed if someone were interested in taking over the lead role in organizing work parties.

**Trail Scouts:** Here is a job especially suited to those who do a lot of hiking on our trails. We ask you to hike a specific section of trail to report back on a reported issue that the TC and Zone Leader cannot get to for a while. And it's always OK for you to say no!

**Specialized "Niche" Jobs:** There are a number of jobs that come up that the Director would love some help with on an *ad hoc*, as-needed basis. None would require a lot of time, but all are necessary. They include:

- preparing boards for signs and blazes (buying lumber, and/or cutting to size, and/or painting)
- cutting and drilling metal angle bars for signs
- updating data and preparation of reports as needed
- updating maps
- helping to organize and schedule work parties
- creating GPS tracks for new or rerouted trails

**Flying Squads:** One of the best ways to learn what we are all about—and to have a good time—is to get your name on the list we contact if a particular flying squad job – like repairing a washed-out bridge, replacing a boardwalk – comes up (frequency of participation in specific jobs is totally voluntary and we can find a role for anyone).

If you are interested in trail work or support, please contact Bob Hann at [bvrvlytd@gmail.com](mailto:bvrvlytd@gmail.com).

## Trail Activities

Of course, the Club offers organized hikes for those who like to hike with a group. A wide variety of activities make up this sphere: regularly scheduled hikes, badge hikes, snowshoe outings, annual hiking events and challenges. We are currently seeking a Trail Activities Director (training, shadowing and mentoring provided).

We are in need of more volunteers interested in being:

- "Trail Angels" to drive hikers to and from their start, finish and meet-up points;
- Hike Leaders
- Event support workers – organizers and volunteers to coordinate parking, set up checkpoints with food and water, etc.

To reach about being a trail activities volunteer, go to [beavervalleytrailactivities@gmail.com](mailto:beavervalleytrailactivities@gmail.com).

## Landowner Relations

Our Club has Landowner Ambassadors (LAs) who keep in touch with local landowners who allow the Trail to pass over their land, as well as some adjacent landowners to the trail route. We are looking for a Director who would recruit LAs for and mentor this work, coordinate the distribution of thank-you's to landowners, help plan events of appreciation, gather annual contact reports from LAs, ensure data systems on landowners and LAs are kept up-to-date, and play a role in trouble-shooting and land securement as appropriate and in concert with other volunteers.

## Membership and Volunteers

Our Club's Membership and Volunteers Director (a position currently filled on an interim-only basis) welcomes all new volunteers and hooks them up with an appropriate Director, if they know what kind of work they likely will want to do; otherwise we proceed to manipulate them into the job we want them for! Just kidding, sort of.

Social events are among the giant tubes of "glue" that unite the members and volunteers of our Club. These are the AGM meeting/potlucks, soup's-ons, Volunteer Appreciation Nights, the Festive Season party – and just about any other event that seems to call for food and drink (and seemingly almost every event does). These events serve our love of getting together (for the purpose of shameless

braggadocio, among other things), giving back to our volunteers, sharing news and ideas, etc. Naturally, the thousand details that make up a successful social event can require many hands.

Whether you are happy just to do the occasional stint baking or doing the audio for a Club BBQ, or you are interested in helping to come up with new ways to welcome, thank and support our members and volunteers, plan or coordinate our volunteer and member outreach efforts, etc., you and your ideas are welcome.

### Communications/Public Outreach and Education

There are a lot of misconceptions about the Bruce Trail – among them that it is just a trail! – and it is important to set things straight. The Club has a variety of methods for keeping the Conservancy and the Club’s goals and activities—as well as reroutes and trail closures – in the public eye: Facebook, our website, this newsletter, Instagram, “Beaver Bytes”, attendance at community festivals and outdoor challenges, distribution of print materials (increasingly rare), and so on. In turn, this publicity serves to attract and inform members, recruit volunteers, alert people to reroutes or trail closures, etc.

- Writing for the website or newsletter
- Newsletter Editor or Co-Editor

### Administrative Services

Hurt your back? If you cannot do volunteering out in nature, you have our sympathies. But you also have opportunities! Archives; financial planning and controls; a computer-readable data system that helps us keep track of the people, the properties and the trails involved in our work; answering queries from hikers and others; liaison with the Conservancy; and a seemingly endless round of backup activities that feed the process. While your back heals, why not fill the happy hours oiling the machine?

Training is available if you think you might wish to become a Board member in the future (we need a Vice President, a Trail Activities Director, and a Landowner Relations Director).

## A dazzling future awaits you in your next Beaver Valley Bruce Trail volunteering adventure!

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### SAVE THE DATE!

**Bruce Trail Conservancy**

**Annual Meeting**

**Saturday, October 14, 10 am to 12 noon**

*Join via Zoom*

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<https://brucetrail.org/annual-meeting-2023>

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### Health and Safety Corner: Stay Safe!

#### Hunting Season—Fall 2023

Please take care when out during hunting seasons, and be sure to wear bright clothing if hiking during the season. Public land is available for hunting in the province, including many popular local spots where visitors abound! Official hunting dates are available at <https://www.ontario.ca/document/ontario-hunting-regulations-summary>.

#### Black Ticks Can't Jump!

New research suggests that ticks don't actually jump onto you from blades of tall grass. Rather, it is the static electricity on your body as you brush past things that attracts the critters over to you. Protect yourself from tick-borne Lyme disease by avoiding long grass, wearing long-sleeved shirts and tucking your pant hems into thick socks while hiking. Stay on the Trail. When you get home, check for ticks on your body (or have a friend assist with this step).

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### Conservation News and Notes

#### Using Bugs to Kill Invasives

The *Guelph Mercury Tribune* reported in June that University of Toronto Smith Forest Health Lab researchers, working with the City of Guelph, are testing the use of "bio-controls" – in this case moths and weevils – to deal with the City's phragmites and garlic mustard problems. In development for over 20 years in the laboratory, the bio-controls are now being tested in a number of sites. The pilot test sites are being closely watched to ensure the bio-controls are not having any "off-target impacts" on species which are not the problem.

#### Bikers Bugged by Bio restoration

Yet another example of the growing squeeze for land locally: A letter from a mountain biker to the editor of a local periodical, complaining that Ontario Parks had closed a popular local trail in order that the area may be allowed to begin natural regeneration without bike traffic.

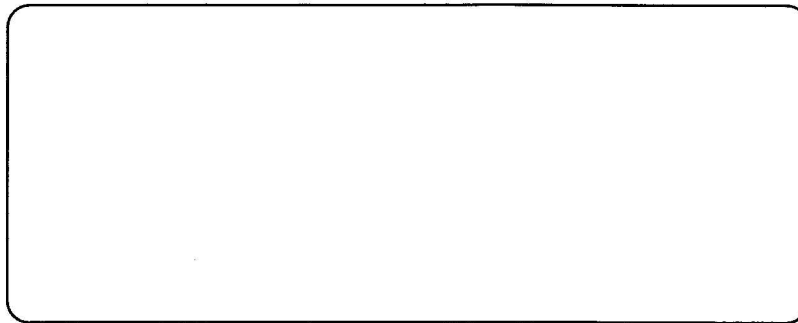
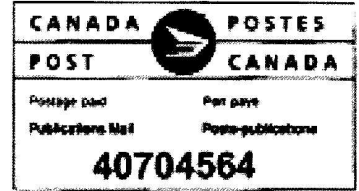
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