



Bruce Trail
CONSERVANCY
IROQUOIA CLUB

Spring 2024

"Preserving a ribbon of wilderness, for everyone, forever."

Spring has arrived on the Bruce Trail!

Welcome to the spring edition of the Iroquoia Bruce Trail Club Newsletter!

As the frost melts away and the days lengthen, the Bruce Trail comes alive with vibrant colors and delicate blooms. Spring is a magical time to explore the trail, with each step unveiling new wonders of nature. From the verdant valleys to the rocky escarpments, the trail offers a tapestry of sights and sounds that beckon adventurers and nature enthusiasts alike.

As you wander along the Bruce Trail this spring, keep your eyes peeled for some of the first ephemeral flowers that emerge from the forest floor, such as Bloodroot, or Ontario's provincial flower, the Trillium. These delicate blooms, though short-lived, are a testament to the resilience and beauty of nature.

Here's what you'll find in this edition of our newsletter:

- **Sparking Hiking Joy with the Embers** - our club shares the love of the Bruce Trail with a local Embers group
- **Trail Angel's Program** - We are launching locally!
- **Land Stewardship Updates** - Conservation efforts blooming this spring
- **Trail Maintenance Updates** - Passionate Hiker Turned Dedicated Volunteer, A Light-Hearted Look at a Trail Captain's Work and the First Saturday Work Party
- **The Hiking Corner** - Hiking in Mud and Tick Season
- **Book Review** - 40 Days & 40 Hikes - by Nicola Ross

- **Autorenewing BTC Membership** - Join program by April 30th for a chance to win!
- **Members save with Conservation Halton** - BTC Members receive 50% off CH Membership

Happy trails!
The Iroquoia Bruce Trail Club

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Sparking Hiking Joy with the Embers

Our club's recent adventure with a local Embers group was a magical experience as we embarked on our second meetup with these enthusiastic young hikers. With a group of eight adventurers, aged 7-8, our mission was to ignite their passion for the Bruce Trail and instill in them the importance of responsible hiking. In our first meeting, we went over the essentials to pack on a hike, how to read the Bruce Trail blazes and how to dress appropriately for a hike. Armed with their new knowledge, our young explorers eagerly awaited their chance to test their skills on trail.

Our chosen route, a 4 km loop weaving along the Iroquoia Heights Side Trail and the Main Bruce Trail. The Embers group was thrilled by the beautiful layer of snow covering the ground and the anticipation of what discoveries awaited them along the trail. As we trekked, our keen-eyed adventurers spotted a variety of birds, particularly drawn to the bird feeders strategically placed along our path. With the help of hike sweep Peter, several young hikers were lucky enough to attract a few Black-capped Chickadees to feed out of their hands. The excitement of also spotting Blue Jays, and White-breasted Nuthatches fuelled the wonder and curiosity felt by all.

After some much needed recharging with some lunch and the encouragement of our adult hikers, the Embers continued along the hike. Snacks always save the day! After that, a highlight of our hike was a stop along the historic rail trail, where Peter shared a collection of old photos and maps to understand some of the history of the area.

Upon completing our adventure, we celebrated the accomplishments of our young hikers, presenting each with a Bruce Trail Pride Sticker and a My First Hike Badge. As we said our goodbyes to the Embers group, we felt excited about sharing our love for nature with these future trailblazers. We hope to see them along the trail soon!



Trail Angel's Program

WE'RE LAUNCHING A TRAIL ANGELS PROGRAM AND WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Are you looking to get more involved with the Iroquoia Bruce Trail Club and make a difference in the hiking community? If so, we've got an exciting opportunity for you!

You may have heard about Trail Angels before. We're looking to launch this service locally. Joining our Trail Angels team offers countless opportunities to enrich the hiking experience in our breathtaking section of the Bruce Trail.

As a Trail Angel, you'll provide transportation assistance to fellow hikers, helping them explore more of the trail and embark on unforgettable journeys. But it's not just about rides—it's about building connections, fostering camaraderie, and sharing your knowledge.

We're not just looking for volunteers who can provide rides; we're also seeking an individual who can lead interactions with hikers and the coordination of these rides. If you have organizational skills and want to help run this program, we need you!

Join us today and be part of this new program at IBTC! If you're interested in volunteering, or have any questions, please reach out to iroquoiavolunteer@gmail.com and we'll be in touch.

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Land Stewardship Updates

Conservation Efforts Blossoming Along the Bruce Trail

As we stride into the heart of conservation season, it's time to celebrate the dedicated efforts of our land stewards, conservation volunteers, and staff who are working tirelessly to protect and restore our beloved Bruce Trail Conservancy properties.

Currently, we have 18 land stewards (individuals or teams) actively monitoring, conserving, and restoring 24 BTC properties, ranging from small to large. This team is supported by over 50 Conservation Volunteers and Trail Development and Maintenance Volunteers, as well as 4 people waiting for land steward assignments. Their collective efforts are crucial in ensuring the success of our land stewardship initiatives. A special thank you to all involved for your unwavering commitment and dedication.

One inspiring example comes from Martin, Land Steward of River and Ruin, who has been diligently tackling invasive buckthorn growth on the property. Thanks to the efforts of volunteers like Paul, significant progress has been made, with a noticeable reduction in buckthorn over the years. Now, the focus shifts to addressing periwinkle, with spraying identified as the most effective approach. Next on the "to do" invasive plant list at River and Ruin is periwinkle. Spraying has been identified as the best approach to help reduce the spread and the first spray took place in mid-October 2023.



Invasive species management continues across various properties, with volunteers pulling bags of periwinkle at the smaller MacAulay property and Land Steward Samar Smith leading efforts to remove persistent plants.

Wild Parsnip is a dangerous invasive plant now found in southwestern Ontario. It poses a hazard to those enjoying the Bruce Trail. This patch of Wild Parsnip at River and Ruin was addressed by BTC volunteers and staff who also helped neighbouring landowners with any plants on their property.

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Efforts to combat thistles after a controlled burn at Fisher Pond have been very positive. BTC Ecologist Mara reported that she was really happy to see that the native grasses seem to be thriving and some of the wildflowers that were seeded are starting to appear.

The Seed Orchard at McNally, spearheaded by BTC Ecologist Lyndsey Wilkerson, serves as a valuable resource in this endeavor. Already, seeds from the Garden have been utilized to restore land at Fisher Pond, showcasing the impact of collaborative conservation efforts.



If you're interested in joining our Conservation Volunteer Team and contributing to these vital efforts, please contact Land Steward Director Cynthia Archer info@iroquoia.on.ca. Together, let's continue to protect and preserve the natural wonders of the Bruce Trail for generations to come.

Trail Maintenance Updates

Passionate Hiker Turned Dedicated Volunteer - Steve Brown - Trail Captain

I have been a Trail Maintenance volunteer in the Iroquoia Section for 7.5 years. During this time, I have gone from Trail Monitor to a Trail Captain and participate in work parties on a regular basis.

I started out knowing relatively very little about the role but joined out of passion for hiking and being outdoors. I quickly learned that there is more than meets the eye when it comes to maintaining a trail and building many of the trail structures.

My experience on work parties has been very fulfilling. I have learned something every time I have attended a work party. The more seasoned Trail Maintenance folks have been generous with their time in teaching their building techniques. One of most rewarding take always has been getting to know the other workers and sharing life stories. I always leave a Trail Maintenance morning/day feeling more fulfilled.

I would highly recommend this volunteer activity to anyone who appreciates the outdoors.



A Light-Hearted Look at a Trail Captain's Work - Herman Proper - Trail Captain

I was informed that there were two dead trees hanging over the stairs going down from Wilson Street on my trail section, Iroquois C20. They were hung high, their crests caught in the tops of the surrounding trees. One was about 3 inches across and the other about 4-5 inches in diameter.

Fortunately, I had my bow-saw with me and dealt with these two serious offenders. Later, at home, I wrote a short ditty about the downfall of these dangerous foes.

*With might and main, I cut the twain,
and brought them tumbling down.
With saw and bow, I brought them low;
forced them to leave the crown.
So on these stairs, we've no more cares,
of people getting hurt,
Offending limbs have now been trimmed,
crestfallen in the dirt.*



First Saturday Work Party of 2024

We are happy to report the success of our first Saturday work party, catering to those volunteers who are unable to join us during our regular Tuesday sessions. Led by the efforts of Joe Verhaeghe, a total of 8 volunteers gathered to tackle trail footpath clearing along the Oakridge Side Trail.

Despite the cold weather challenges, our team worked diligently to clear the path, laying the groundwork for future improvements. As the weather improves, we aim to focus on benching and blazing along the trail throughout the Iroquoia Club area.

Looking ahead, our goal is to host two mini work parties per month, providing ample opportunities for our community members to contribute to the upkeep and enhancement of our beloved trails.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Joe Verhaeghe and all the volunteers who dedicated their time and energy to maintaining the trail, we look forward to continuing our efforts together in the coming months.



The Hiking Corner

Hiking During Mud and Tick Season

by Ruth Moffatt, IBTC Hike Director

It's March! This usually signals Mud Season on the trail. The following are some tips to keep in mind while hiking during Mud Season.

1. Plan. Check, if you can, to see what the conditions are like. Perhaps choosing a section of road or a rocky section is a better option. Hike on higher ground.
2. Wear appropriate boots and gaiters to protect your boots and clothing.
3. Consider using trekking poles for extra stability while hiking through muddy sections.
4. Plan to always hike through the middle of the trail if it is safe to do so. If you can clearly see that you will not be submerged in the mud and water, step carefully and slowly, through it. Going around or trying to avoid these sections of trail can be more dangerous and it is hard on the trail as it will enlarge the muddy section of trail, it affects the plants, soil and trees around the area and causes braiding of the trail. Our trail maintenance volunteers will thank you!
5. Back at your vehicle, carry a heavy-duty boot brush. Brushing the mud off your boots after each hike will help save your boots and may help prevent the spread of invasive species. A plastic bag or shower caps are handy if you have to travel in someone's vehicle.

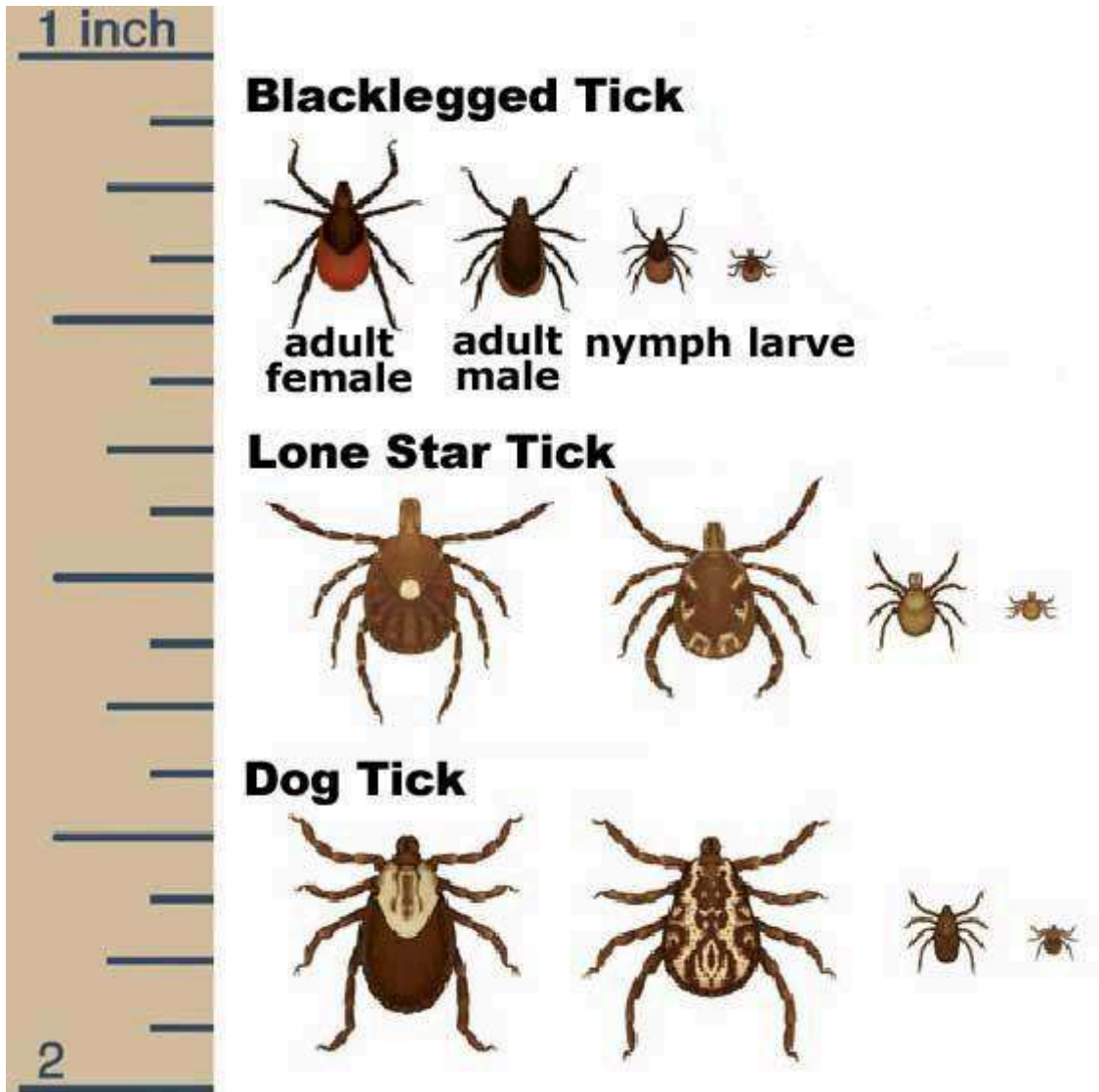


Ticks

Here in southern Ontario, when is it *not* tick season? Ticks can be active in temperatures above 3C. That pretty much means nearly all year around in this area, so it is best to be tick aware throughout the year. The following are some preventative measures to keep in mind while hiking in areas that are prone to having ticks:

1. Wear light-coloured long pants and long sleeves, so the ticks are more visible.
2. Tuck your pants into your socks like a pro-hiker.
3. Wear a brimmed hat to keep them off your head and out of your hair.
4. Keep your backpack off the ground and hang it on a tree branch if possible.
5. Hike down the centre of the trail and away from tall grasses where they “quest” and can easily hitch a ride if you brush up against the grass.
6. Consider using insect repellent that works against ticks.
7. Clothing, that has been treated with permethrin, works to repel ticks and other bugs but will wane over time with repeated washings.
8. Know your ticks. Some black-legged ticks carry Lyme and are known to be in areas frequented by deer. Dog ticks do not. Lone Star ticks have been reported in Ontario.

9. Know how to remove the tick, save the tick, and report the tick if need be.
10. Do a thorough check when returning from a hike including dogs.



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Book Review

“The flora and fauna may have no way to fight back; but we have tools at hand – and foot. A good start is by walking – and loving – the BT.”

(Nicola Ross, *40 Days & 40 Hikes*)

Nicola Ross’ latest book, *40 Days & 40 Hikes: Loving the Bruce Trail one Loop at a Time*, is a great reminder of the many things that make our Bruce Trail so special. In what is more like a travelogue than a hiking guide, the author of the well-known *Loops & Lattes Hiking Guides*, takes us on an end-to-end journey of the Bruce Trail in her own unique way.

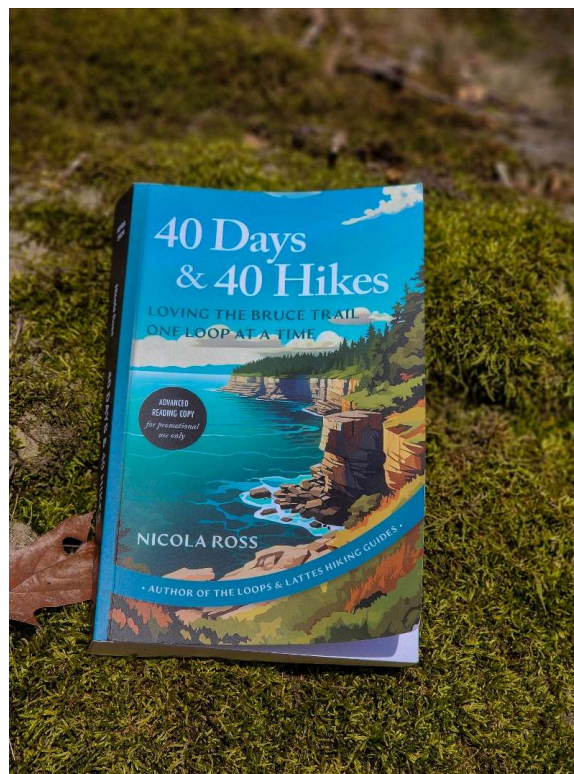
Through a series of 40 imaginative loops, we are invited to follow along as the author explores the history, flora, fauna, and unique geology she encounters along the way. The accounts are dotted with personal musings about what brought her out along this marvelous

footpath and the ever-growing urgency to protect this fragile ecosystem.

Just like the trail itself, the book is separated into 9 sections with each day (chapter) starting off with a map and details of the trails hiked, conditions, what map(s) of the BT guide the hike fell on and the flora and fauna encountered that day.

When the book comes out April 9th, be ready to strap on your favourite pair of hikers and follow along on a trip that is filled with history, unique geological features and flora and fauna found along our beloved trail.

By: Kathrin Konig



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As one of the largest Bruce Trail Conservancy Clubs, we have a circulation of approximately 3000 subscribers. The eNotes newsletter is distributed quarterly by email.

Please contact Jessica Clark Barrow, Director of Fundraising at jessicacbarrow@gmail.com to secure your space in our next publication

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BTC Members Save with Conservation Halton

BTC Members receive 50% off Conservation Halton Membership

The Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC) and Conservation Halton have a longstanding relationship, working together to protect land along the Bruce Trail in the Halton watershed and encouraging people to explore the Niagara Escarpment.

To honour this partnership, Conservation Halton offers BTC members a coupon for 50% off a Conservation Halton Membership.

How to take advantage of this generous offer:

1. **Login** as a member to the Bruce Trail Conservancy website (<https://brucetrail.org>)

2. **Request** a discount coupon on the Bruce Trail Conservancy website here:

<https://brucetrail.org/conservation-halton-membership-coupon-request/>

3. **Redeem** your coupon code on the Conservation Halton website here:

<https://www.conservationhalton.ca/park-fees-membership-rates/>

(Look for the Purchase/Renew Membership button and use the code in the checkout process.)

Bruce Trail Conservancy members may request no more than 1 coupon per year.

Learn more about Conservation Halton parks at www.conservationhalton.ca.



Share your hike photos and experiences with us

We want to hear from you!

Instagram page: [iroquoiabrucetrailclub](#) and

Facebook page: [Iroquoia Bruce Trail Club](#).

E-Mail: info@iroquoia.on.ca

Let's do our part to respect and protect nature by staying on the marked trails and leaving plants, trees and wildlife untouched for others to discover and admire. Please leave the trails, forests, meadows and wetlands as you find them.

Sign up for the Iroquoia E-notes.

Iroquoia E-notes are for members and non-members. Our E-notes are sent out by email to your inbox regularly. Signing up is easy; go to the Club webpage www.iroquoia.on.ca, scroll to the bottom and you will see where you can sign up on the left hand side.



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