

Bruce Trail CONSERVANCY

DUFFERIN HI-LAND CLUB

WINTER 2022



ONE OF OUR BETTER ANGELS

Growing up on a farm near Shelburne, Carl Alexander spent a great deal of time outdoors. His ancestors were some of the first settlers in Horning's Mills in 1832. As a young man, pursuing his engineering degree and career led him to the Waterloo area for 32 years. While raising a family there with his first wife, Carl enjoyed a multi-faceted career that included managing an industrial pump company and hands-on building houses with his brothers-in-law.

It was during family holidays on the Bruce Peninsula that Carl discovered the Bruce Trail. Purchasing his first guidebook in 1974, he learned about the Niagara escarpment and the trail that extends through the Dufferin Hi-Lands where he grew up.

In 1993, Carl purchased 18 acres in Mulmur for a future home. Quitting work at aged 54, he pursued his dream of building a retirement home there in 2002. He was then persuaded by Ralph Tremills to become involved in trail maintenance with the Dufferin Hi-Land Bruce Trail Club. His engineering expertise and building background soon saw Carl

taking on a number of ambitious projects which have benefitted hikers from near and far and continue to help drive new projects for our club.

Susan Oleskevich Award

After 18 years of hard work and dedication, this summer Carl's trail work was recognized with a Susan Oleskevich Award for outstanding long-term commitment to the construction and maintenance of the Bruce Trail. This well-deserved honour spotlights Carl's many talents in the planning, development and oversight of construction of bridge and boardwalk structures for the past 11 years. Of particular note, was his design and building of an award winning, cascading boardwalk in Mono.

A talented sawyer, Carl has also designed and built five trail benches and is instrumental in ensuring that existing structures in the Dufferin Hi-Land section remain in good condition. He also helps in all elements of trail building and cuts several kilometres of grass to help keep trails accessible to all.

HI-LAND VIEWS

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Say hello to 2022. We've spent a long two years managing safe hiking protocols and we continue to make decisions with your health as our priority. I extend a huge thank you to our volunteers who navigate these challenges while keeping a sense of humour.

Fortunately, even though we've had to stay close to home, our hike leaders, trail captains, land stewards and landowners keep the trail in great shape by removing fallen branches and trees, exploring reroutes and acquiring property to preserve this "ribbon of wilderness" which is a vital link to the community and our friendships.



"I challenge each of you to hike a new trail every month this year" - Susan - Photo taken at Walk Off the Turkey Hike.

Dufferin Hi-Land BTC is making plans to host three Challenge Hikes this year: the Two-Day E2E on May 14-15, our One-Day E2E on June 18, and the Boyne Valley 25K Challenge on October 1, which launched very successfully last fall. Keep these dates and be mindful that the situation may dictate otherwise.

I challenge each of you to hike a new trail every month this year, see it in a different season, from the opposite direction, in the rain, with a new hiker, using the BT App.

Take a five-minute pause during your hike and absorb your surroundings. What smells fill your nostrils, what sights draw your eye, how does it make you feel? The secret to happy living isn't a secret anymore, it's under your feet and it's outside.

This is an exciting time to be a member of the Bruce Trail Conservancy. There are a myriad of opportunities where you can volunteer with us and make new friends. We are actively looking for people to write articles for this newsletter, run our social media, be back up IT, help fundraise, share ideas and more. Can you help us?

This newsletter highlights some areas of concern from last year all with happy outcomes. Certainly, the parking issues were front and centre in both Mono and Mulmur townships which Bryan Foley shares with us. Longtime volunteer Carl Alexander is recognized by BTC with a special award all his own. Reminding us to stop, look, and listen is Brenda Carling on how to recognize signs of animal life in the forest. Carl Tafel cheers on the people that maintain the rough spots.

Read on and enjoy the winter snow.
In any season, DHL President - [Susan Ford](#)

FEATURE VIDEO



[Bruce Trail Conservancy - A Legacy Year\(2021\)](#)
[See https://youtu.be/hN1gFFIX2xE](https://youtu.be/hN1gFFIX2xE)

ONE OF OUR BETTER ANGELS

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WINTER 2022

Leading by Example

Growing up in Dufferin, Carl has a good understanding and appreciation of local landowners. He knows how incredibly important it is to the long-term success of the Bruce Trail to maintain good relationships with those families.

"After getting away from the frustrations of the work world, it wasn't an ambition of mine to take on a leadership role. However, I became involved as Director of Landowner Relations in 2004 because I enjoy working with local landowners and made it my mission to help keep them happy," says Carl.



DHBTC Trail Angel - Carl Alexander

A natural progression of those relationships led to a further role with the Dufferin Hi-Land Club as Director of Land Securement, a role that Carl also retains to this day. Long time landowners appreciate Carl's knowledge of the area, and new landowners enjoy learning more about the history of their properties thanks to his knowledge of the families who have previously owned their land.

In the spring of 2020 during the securement process of a vital link between the Pine River Fishing Area and 15 Sideroad, an adjacent property was also acquired, resulting in the creation of the Pine River Nature Reserve.

Working in conjunction with Land Stewardship Director Brian Cornfield, they were tasked with eliminating the abuse by off-road vehicles in the area. This challenge has proven to be a 2-year undertaking. Luckily Tom Thayer came on board to aid in the enforcement of a Hiking Only area, truly illustrating the value of teamwork to get a difficult job done.

Steps to rehabilitate the damaged environment are underway by the Bruce Trail Conservancy and will allow additional hiking trails.

In addition to those overlapping roles, Carl stepped in when needed to serve as Club President in 2014, proud at the end of his term in 2017 to hand over a club with many capable and dedicated members.

New Role as Trail Angel

Before the current COVID restrictions, Carl helped to organize a new service in the Dufferin Hi-Land section. With the assistance of a couple of other club members, they started the 'Trail Angel' program, similar to that in other BT Clubs. Acting as volunteer drivers for hikers wishing to start at one location and hike back to their own vehicles, Carl and the others found themselves very much enjoying their new duties.

"It's a very different way to meet people, some very entertaining for sure. Most are fairly hard core hikers completing their End-to-End, and all are very appreciative of the ride," says Carl.

With such a long tenure with the club, and so many different roles along the way, it is difficult to quantify the contribution of volunteers like Carl. One thing is for certain, the Dufferin Hi-Land Club has greatly benefitted from the selfless dedication, many talents and seemingly boundless energy of Carl Alexander - one of the club's better angels.

- **Melina Cormier**

DHBTB ADVOCACY HELPS TO EASE PARKING PRESSURES

As Covid 19 impacted the world in March 2020 with mask requirements in public places, sanitizing of hands and contact areas, work at home orders, shut downs of restaurants, entertainment/recreational centres and so on - our hiking trails became impacted as well. With few options in which to spend their free time, it seemed everyone became a hiker.

Local newspapers showed images of the Mono Cliffs Provincial Park (3rd Line EHS) parking lot overflowing with cars lining both sides of the 3rd Line as well as other park access points. Local residents were uncomfortable with the huge increase in traffic, authorities cited the over parking issue as unsafe as well as an infringement on the community. Swift action needed to be taken, so we saw the proliferation of 'No Parking' signs surround the park.



I saw for myself cars parking on private property, picnicking on private property and garbage being left behind. I sympathized with home owners, but at the same time I saw where locals and hikers wishing to access various areas of the park were being forced to park at Mono Community Centre or the 3rd Line parking lot. This meant a 10 kilometre hike there and back to enjoy views from the natural lookout for example, something young children or walkers as opposed to hikers would not be able to do.

In 2021, I approached Mono Town Council with a suggestion that concessions could be made to the 'No Parking' signs blanketing of the area. John Creelman, now Mayor, and Fred Nix, now Deputy Mayor, were very supportive of my presentation. To their credit, Council visited the park and as a result some additional parking via directional signage has been designated.

In addition to 3rd Line parking lot and Mono Centre Community Centre, a 5 car parking allowance is also once again possible at 25 Sideroad and 2nd Line EHS, a 10 car allowance at 1st Line south of 25 Sideroad, and a 12 car allowance at 2nd Line north of 20 Sideroad. This allows hikers wanting to explore all areas of the park in multiple, shorter hikes from different access points that opportunity.

The parking issue seems infectious throughout the length of the Bruce Trail, and perhaps the best solution is the establishment of more parking lots as well as a strong, positive relationship with Councils and Townships. To the credit of the DHBTB Executive and the work of Brian Cornfield, Carl Alexander, Carl Tafel to name a few, the Rock Hill and Splitrock parking lots have been expanded and better still these lots will be ploughed after significant snowfalls.

In addition, Carl Alexander, having been designated by BTC as the contact with Mulmur Township, has enabled parallel parking at the top of 2nd Line north of 8 Sideroad. 'Parallel Parking Only' signage has been erected south of the private driveway on the west side and the township has committed to ploughing the snow farther back where parking is allowed.



There is further good news to share on the parking area on Centre Road south of 5 Sideroad. With township support, the Bruce Trail Conservancy has applied to the Niagara Escarpment Commission to build a 20 car parking lot on the unused road allowance. This is a very popular parking area for hikers to take a quick hike into the Boyne Valley. If approved, the plan is to build this lot as a priority in the spring of 2022. The township has erected 'No Parking' signs north of the unused portion of the trail.

Wishing everyone happy winter hiking and a reminder to be careful of the ditches. - **Bryan Foley**

WINTER WILDERNESS AWARENESS

There is something refreshing (other than the cold temperature) about a winter hike. Things hidden by summer foliage are revealed and the movement of animals is visible on the canvas of snow.



DEER TRACKS



BIRD TRACKS



MOUSE TRACKS



RABBIT TRACKS

We can often see the signs of animals not only by their tracks, but chew marks, nests, and scat.



CHEW MARKS - WOODPECKER



CHEW MARKS - PILEATED WOODPECKER



CHEW MARKS - PORCUPINE



TREE CAVITY - SMALL MAMMAL HOME



SQUIRREL DREY HIGH IN A TREE

All photos by Brenda Carling

WINTER WILDERNESS AWARENESS *CONTINUED*



BIRD NEST PROTECTED IN A HAWTHORN



DEER SCAT



RABBIT SCAT

From time to time we are lucky to see the animals themselves. Winter even provides a chance for more wildflower identification by looking at the seed heads of some plants.

Looking at animal tracks, the pattern is often more important than the individual footprint. For example the deep widely spaced tracks suggest a deer, a raised tunnel under the snow may be a mouse or vole and signs that something has plowed through the snow indicate that a porcupine has been around.

A quick online search comes up with some resources for animal tracking.

<https://www.ontarioparks.com/parksblog/winter-wildlife-tracking/>

https://www.natureconservancy.ca/assets/documents/dm/NCC_NovYearEnd_TrackingGuide_v8.pdf

<https://www.inthehills.ca/2016/11/tracking-101/>

Young American Beech trees are remarkable because the leaves hang on through the winter and only drop off in the spring as new leaves are budding out.

One of the few references to wildflowers in winter comes in the form of an identification sheet from University of Guelph. <https://arboretum.uoguelph.ca/educationandevents/id-sheets/animal-signs-winter>

The book "Nature in Winter" by Donald and Lillian Stokes is highly recommended.

Enjoy figuring out what is happening along the Bruce Trail as you are hiking. Something new with each snowfall! - **Brenda Carling**



CANADA ANEMONE



MILKWEED

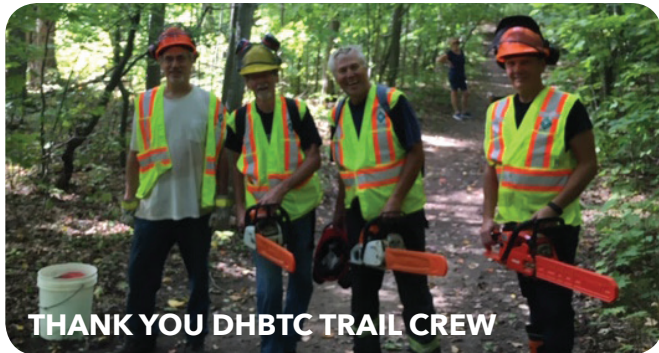


YARROW

DUFFERIN HI-LAND TRAILS IN GOOD SHAPE DESPITE PANDEMIC

Even with the challenges of maintaining the trail during another year of Covid restrictions, Trail Development and Maintenance Director Carl Tafel is pleased to report that the Dufferin Hi-Land trail section remains in excellent shape.

"I'd like to thank our twenty-four Trail Captains for their efforts. Many of our readers have noticed them on the trail wearing their yellow BTC vests as they patrol and maintain their sections; keeping the trail and treadway clear, refreshing blazes and reporting back to me any other issues," says Carl.



THANK YOU DHBTC TRAIL CREW

For most of 2021 there were no major storms, that is, until mid December, when two wind storms ripped through the area in less than a week. The resulting damage necessitated the cutting of approximately twenty trees over and across the trail, along with an equivalent amount that were hand sawed or pulled away. Bryan and Carol Foley, Carl Alexander, Lynda Vera and Brian Cornfield all assisted Tafel in this effort.

"The pandemic made organizing work parties difficult. Fortunately, our structures remain in excellent shape thanks to the replacement of boards on stiles and boardwalks, steps and sections of sidelogging, as well as blazeboards and signage when needed," adds Tafel.

Grass cutting remains an extremely important aspect of trail maintenance from spring to fall. Carl Alexander and Norm Wingrove also helped Tafel with the cutting of the many trail sections which cross their properties.

Lastly, the DHBTC was fortunate to add the Pine River Nature Reserve properties to our section allowing for the three kilometres of new trail with the efforts of volunteers: Ian Shelton, Jim Preyde, Carl Alexander, Brian Cornfield, Jeff and Donna Dyke, Bryan and Carol Foley, Brendan Neely, Everhard Olivieri-Munroe, Lorna Illick and Susan Snell. - **Carl Tafel**

THANK YOU TO DUFFERIN HI-LAND LANDOWNERS

After the December windstorms on a beautiful sunny day I was clearing dead limbs from a section of trail beside a small abandoned hayfield. With fresh snow underfoot, I was walking quietly.

Just by luck I glanced into the field and there sat a beautiful red fox, fully mature with a sleek coat and long bushy tail. From behind a large tree I watched for several minutes. Field mice are the bulk of a fox's diet and it was intently looking and listening for mice under the snow. Suddenly like a coiled spring, it would leap forward and pounce. A hawk was sitting in a tree-top observing the fox.



Gracefully the hawk took wing and literally dive bombed the fox, reminding him that this was also his "restaurant" and it needed to be shared. The fox gracefully trotted off to another corner of the field.

My mind drifted back to 1957 when foxes were very common in this area but a massive rabies outbreak decimated them. About 25 years ago they were making a comeback when the disease called mange spread from coyotes, once again drastically reducing their numbers. Hopefully, this time they will persevere.

Those several moments watching nature made my day. It also reminded me that this was possible only because a generous landowner allowed the trail on their property. Otherwise, I could not have been there.

With COVID again locking us down, these precious hours on the Bruce Trail are so vital to our well being.

To our landowners I want to say thank you. You are contributing significantly to peoples' ability to cope with these trying times. - **Carl Alexander**

A photograph of two skiers, a woman in a yellow jacket and a man in a red jacket, standing in a snowy mountain landscape. They are holding their skis and looking towards the camera. In the background, there are snow-covered mountain peaks under a clear blue sky.

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SAVE THE DATES

TWO DAY E2E

Saturday May 14 and Sunday May 15 2022

Red Trillium Badge: The Red Trillium Badge is awarded to those hikers who participate in the Dufferin Hi-Land Two Day End-to-End Hike and complete the full 56.3 km distance.

This is an annual event where participants will be transported via bus from a central parking area to begin each day's hike.

ONE DAY E2E

Saturday June 18, 2022

White Trillium Badge: The White Trillium Badge is awarded to participants in the Dufferin Hi-Land One Day End-to-End Hike who complete the full 56.3 km distance.

This event is held every other year, with participants being transported by bus to the start location, ending at the parking area.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES JOIN OUR DUFFERIN HI-LAND TEAM

As members and committed supporters of the Bruce Trail Conservancy, our club volunteers dedicate our time and skills to help build awareness and support for the Dufferin Hi-Land Section. As our section continues to grow in popularity, we also work to promote responsible hiking and respect for the natural environment and wildlife that make their homes along our trails.

Do you have a background in writing, editing, media relations, social media or IT? If so, you may wish to consider one of the following volunteer opportunities:

Assistant to Director of IT - Applicants should have an IT background with WordPress, MySQL, and PHP experience. Those with experience in CPanel and its associated functionality will be given extra consideration. Contact tom@dufferinbrucetrailclub.org

Newsletter Editor/Writer - As a member of the Communications Team, the newsletter editor should have experience in the planning, writing, photography, soliciting and editing of articles from other volunteers, and oversight of the layout and design and publication of newsletters. Contact melinacormier@dufferinbrucetrailclub.org.


Social Media Specialist - As a member of the Communications Team, the social media specialist will have experience in creating and publishing timely content on social media platforms, including Facebook and Instagram, to help build club awareness. Contact melinacormier@dufferinbrucetrailclub.org.

Media Relations Specialist - As a member of the Communications Team, the media relations specialist should have experience in creating and implementing media relations strategies to promote awareness and support for non-profit organizations. Contact melinacormier@dufferinbrucetrailclub.org.



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