

# Dufferin Hi-Land Bruce Trail Club Newsletter

March 2026



Bruce Trail  
CONSERVANCY  
DUFFERIN HI-LAND CLUB



As much as I adore winter hikes, the moment spring shows up with warm breezes and sunshine, I'm ready to sprint out the door. Trees start popping with new buds, migratory birds return like long-lost friends, and wildflowers peek out as if checking whether it's safe to come back. Time to swap those snowshoes for hiking boots and hit the trails.

But before you dash off to greet the sunshine, take a quick reality check: spring weather always comes with surprises. Even if the forecast is all blue skies, early mornings can still bite with below-zero temperatures. Add a windchill and some tricky terrain, and your "spring stroll" can suddenly feel like a winter encore. Check the weather forecast before heading out, and don't forget to review the [Bruce Trail app](#) for trail notices or updates.

Spring sits in that awkward in-between stage: not winter but not quite summer either. Dressing for it can feel like solving a puzzle. Think about temperature, breathability, waterproofing, and wind protection, and rely on the trusty layering system. A base layer, a mid-layer, and an outer shell will help you stay warm without melting the moment the sun comes out.

And don't be fooled by the calendar—early in the season, snow and ice still like to make guest appearances. Stash a pair of icers in your backpack and you will be ready for whatever the trail throws at you.

Lorraine Campbell - newsletter editor

# Upcoming Hikes

April 3

## **Scotsdale Farm Big Loop**

- Pace - Medium
- Distance - 20 km

April 4, 11, 25

## **Quadzilla 3 Series Training Hikes**

- Pace - Medium
- Distance - 25 km/day

April 7

## **Hockley Valley - Dunby Rd/Cam Snell Side Trails**

- Pace - Leisurely
- Distance - 6.5 km

April 14

## **Kilgorie- Pine River Nature Reserve**

- Pace - Leisurely
- Distance - 6 km

April 21


## **Duncan Caves/Metcalf Rock Loop**

- Pace - Leisurely
- Distance - 10 km

April 28

## **Terra Cotta Conservation Area**

- Pace - Medium
- Distance - 6.1 km

Hikes are led by experienced leaders from the Dufferin Hi-Land Bruce Trail Club. You must pre-register. Check the website for more information about dates, times and meeting locations. 

# Tales from the Trail

It is always great to hear hiking tales from our members. Let us know about all your adventures on the trail. Don't forget to send pictures!



A woodpecker clearly had no issue vandalizing one of our blazes!

Inge Eckerich and Ralf Wroblweski led a happy bunch on a wonderful hike through the Great Esker Side Trail at Scotsdale Farm on St. Patrick's Day. Their furry friend, Marley (who coincidentally also has Irish roots) was there to celebrate his own 6th birthday! The club's Tuesday Hikers program is our most active and we are very grateful to Inge, Ralf, Les Babbage, Julie Daley and Tony Evangelista for making it happen. Hikes run 6-8 kms every Tuesday morning.



# Happy Hiking!



Dufferin hikers are dwarfed by the beauty of Sherman Falls.



A late-winter hike to Tiffany Falls led by Gilles Gagnon.

## Dufferin End-to-End May 9, 10



Have you been waiting for winter to end so you can push yourself on an exceptional two day hilly hike? Here is your opportunity to shine!

Registration is now open for this popular hike that will earn you the Red Trillium Badge upon completing the Dufferin section of the Bruce Trail in two days, May 9 and 10, 2026.

Join us for a fun weekend of hills and valleys. Walk, stride, jog, but be sure to meet us at Whitfield early on May 9. Soon you'll be ticking off those kilometres as you make your way through the Boyne Valley, Kilgorie, Honeywood Ridge, Black Bank and Lavender



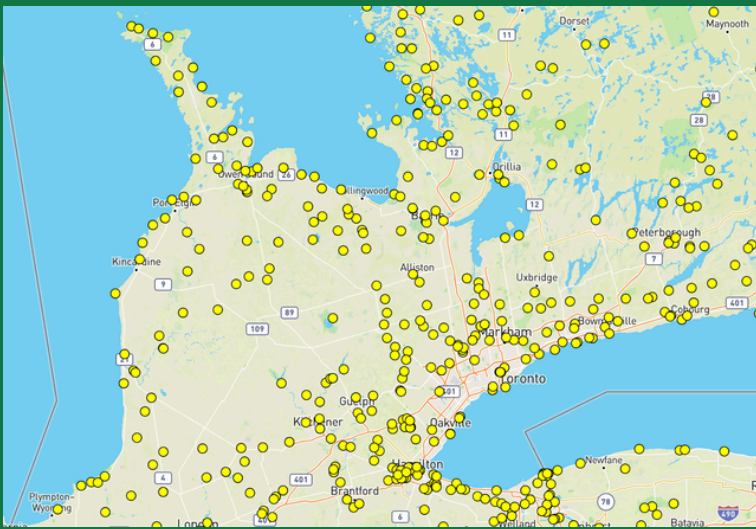
# Parks on the Air

Have you ever been hiking along the Bruce Trail or through a Provincial Park or Conservation Area and encountered another hiker, taking a rest on a bench, speaking into the microphone of some unusual communication device, talking in unfamiliar English phrases, or perhaps tapping out Morse Code?

What you likely encountered was an Amateur Radio operator, a "Ham," participating in a fairly recent phenomenon called Parks on the Air, ([parksontheair.com](http://parksontheair.com)) or POTA. No longer are Hams hunkered down in their basement radio rooms communicating with other hams near and far, but rather, operating portable radios in parks, making contacts with other Hams, who also happen to be in parks!

In 2016, the American Amateur Relay League in the United States started a program to get radio amateurs out operating in the field, in US National Parks, similar to a program in the UK where Hams make contacts from mountain tops, called Summits on the Air, or SOTA ([www.sota.org.uk](http://www.sota.org.uk)). Also based on another similar European amateur radio parks program called World Wide Flora and Fauna ([www.veff.ca](http://www.veff.ca)) intended to draw attention to wild natural areas like parks, POTA encourages Hams to set up portable radios in National, State, Provincial and Conservation parks and other public lands, including recognized trails. Most of our Ontario parks and trails have been added to the POTA system, the Bruce Trail being CA-5628 and The Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve CA-0063, for example. In addition, every park or Conservation Area through which the Bruce Trail passes has its' own POTA identifier. Parks all around the world are included and every country has its' own unique letter prefix, CA for Canada, US for United States, GB for the United Kingdom and so on. When a radio amateur makes a contact with another Ham in a park (called a QSO), they exchange their call signs and enter them in their logs. If both Hams are in parks, they are said to be "Park-to-Park" or P2P, and they both get credit for activating the park they are in as well as hunting the park with which they've made contact. The data in their logs is digitized and uploaded to the POTA website (<http://pota.app>) and Hams can see what parks they have activated and hunted and in which provinces and countries the parks were located. Sometimes you can be making contacts while in two parks at the same time. An example would be hiking on the Bruce Trail CA-5628 while in Mono Cliffs Provincial Park CA-0308. This gives you two points in the POTA database and likewise for any Hams with whom you made contact while you were there.





Map of POTA Parks in Southern Ontario from [www.pota.app](http://www.pota.app)

My goal is to make contacts from each of the POTA Parks in the Dufferin Hi-Land section over the next few years. The map shows many of the POTA Parks in Southern Ontario. Note the ribbon of parks along the Bruce Trail that create an unmistakable pattern.

It's a wonderful extension of one's outdoor hiking adventures to contact people who are also having similar adventures on a trail, in a park, on a mountain top or a wilderness lake somewhere close by or perhaps in another province, country or continent. Making Park-to-Park contacts to the East and West Coasts of North America, the Caribbean and even Europe are quite common. Activating from unique parks, like Signal Hill National Historic Site in Newfoundland, can be quite thrilling, especially if you've hiked all the way up to the top do so!

Rod Murray

QSOs are made using a transceiver to send and receive voice transmissions, Morse Code and even digital messages, where a computer or mobile phone is used to exchange the contact data which includes call signs (e.g. VA3MZD), date, UTC time, park number, and a signal report.

It's a thrill to contact a Ham in another country who is also in a park! One of my most memorable POTA contacts was by voice with a Ham on the Appalachian Trail US-4556 in Georgia while I was hiking the Bruce Trail, atop the Bell Lookout in the Dufferin Hi-Land Section!

Since getting involved with Amateur Radio and POTA in 2021, I have made contacts with Hams in over 1000 parks, in 10 countries, from 20 different parks in BC, Ontario, Quebec and Newfoundland. My



• LOOPS & LATTES HIKING GUIDES •

## Satisfy your Hiking Craving

**NEW RELEASE**  
Now Available

**CALEDON, HOCKLEY VALLEY & MONO CLIFFS HIKES**  
Loops & Lattes Hiking Guides

*It's time for an upgrade*

**Caledon, Hockley Valley & Mono Cliffs Hikes: Loops & Lattes**

The newest and 7th installment in the Loops & Lattes Hiking Guide series.

- Brand new loops
- Improved versions of existing hikes
- Updated après hiking suggestions

*Walk the Bruce Trail your way*

**40 Days & 40 Hikes: Loving the Bruce Trail One Loop at a Time**

A travelogue in the style of *Wild* and *The Salt Path*, without the drama!

Follow Nicola's journey along her beloved Niagara Escarpment from Niagara to Tobermory.

**NEW RELEASE**  
Now Available

**40 Days & 40 Hikes**  
LOVING THE BRUCE TRAIL ONE LOOP AT A TIME

NICOLA ROSS

**Over 52,000 Guides Sold**

Available at [www.loopsandlattes.ca](http://www.loopsandlattes.ca) and at bookstores and other retail shops.

## Thanks to iNaturalist for Recognizing and Promoting the Work of our Biodiversity Committee!

The theme of diversity and interconnection describes our volunteers, audiences, and activities. Over the past two years, our small and energetic committee, in collaboration with BTC experts, Mara McHaffie, Ecologist, and Lyndsey Wilkerson, Project Restoration Coordinator, has organized numerous activities appealing to different audiences. Our committee members bring a variety of expertise and backgrounds that make for thoughtful, constructive, and creative discussions that produce our action and activities. [Read more about what we're doing, why we're doing it, and how you can participate.](#)

### Upcoming Events

- May 9, 2026: [Spring Bioblitz Caledon Hills](#)
- May 14, 2026: [Pine River parking lot natural restoration](#)
- May 15, 2026: Garlic Mustard removal with ODSS students
- May 21, 2026: Milkweed seedling planting; Periwinkle removal with ODSS students
- May 22, 2026: Garlic Mustard removal with ODSS students
- May 22, 2026: Garlic Mustard removal with Toronto Scouts
- June 6, 2026: [American Chestnut Trees Management](#)
- June 6, 2026: [Spring Bioblitz Beaver Valley](#)

# Toronto Club

## 3 Day Hike in Owen Sound



Join the Toronto Bruce Trail Club for three days of hiking on one of the most rugged and scenic sections of the Bruce Trail. Expect challenging terrain, great views, and a full weekend immersed in the outdoors. Click here for more information.



## Badges, Badges, Badges!

We are now offering a free Young Hiker Badge! To earn your badge, you must be 13 years of age or younger and complete one or more hikes on the Dufferin Hi-land section that is a minimum of 3 km long, or that takes at least one hour. You can hike with your family, school or another group. Check out the Dufferin Hi-Land hiking schedule here.



## Protecting the Western Chorus Frogs on the Bruce Trail

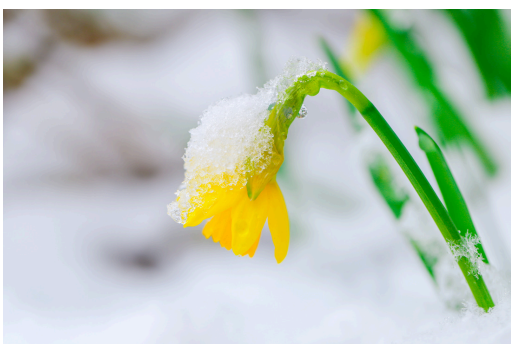
The Bruce Trail Conservancy (BTC) has cancelled plans for the creation of a parking lot after the discovery of Western Chorus Frogs, a federally recognized Species at Risk, on its Croaks Hollow property in the Town of The Blue Mountains. Secured by the BTC in 2024, Croaks Hollow consists of 44 acres in the Beaver Valley section of the Bruce Trail. The BTC had intended to create a small parking lot on the property to safely connect hikers to the trail. In the summer of 2025, BTC staff ecologists recommended cancelling plans for the parking lot in favour of protecting this vulnerable species. The BTC's Board of Directors unanimously agreed that the BTC should prioritize the conservation of habitats for species at risk. Though not considered to be at risk provincially, the Western Chorus Frog is listed as Threatened under the federal Species at Risk Act and continues to face considerable threats in Ontario, including habitat loss due to climate change and human activities.



"Part of enhancing the Bruce Trail experience is ensuring that visitors have safe places to park and access the Trail. However we cannot do that at the expense of the sensitive habitats under our care," said Jaclyn Moody, Chair of the Bruce Trail Conservancy Board of Directors. "By giving this vulnerable ecosystem the stewardship it needs to flourish, we safeguard the incredible biodiversity of the Niagara Escarpment that is our responsibility to protect."

"This is a prime example of our mission at work across all levels at the Bruce Trail Conservancy," said Michael McDonald, Chief Executive Officer of the BTC. "With the recommendations of our expert ecologists, consultations with local Bruce Trail Club volunteers, and the leadership shown by our Board, we are affirming our shared values of protecting nature first and foremost." Staff are currently working with local Bruce Trail Clubs to find another parking solution in the area around Croaks Hollow with the hope that, in doing so, this threatened species will continue to thrive in the habitat the BTC is protecting.

If you would like to support the protection and stewardship of vulnerable lands and species at risk along the Niagara Escarpment, please consider a donation to the Bruce Trail Conservancy by visiting [brucetrail.org/donations](https://brucetrail.org/donations).



# VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



We're Looking for Volunteers!

The Dufferin Hi-Land Bruce Trail Club is seeking volunteers of all kinds, on the trail, in the community, and behind the scenes.

Opportunities include:

- Hike Leaders
- Trail Maintenance & Trail Angels
- Publicity & Community Events
- Marketing, Social Media & Content Creation
- Communications Support
- Merchandising & Branding
- Tech Support (WordPress / web design)
- Sales & Sponsorships
- Conservation, Ecology & Governance expertise

Whether you have specialized skills or simply a willingness to help, there's a role for you.

Curious? Reach out and tell us how you'd like to get involved.

The trail exists because of volunteers, and we'd love to welcome you. 

## *Celebrating the Life of* **Ron Ritchie**



Please join us in celebrating a wonderful life.

- 03 May 2026, 1:00 to 4:00 pm
- Mono Community Centre

## Join us for a Hike!

Visit us on social media:


#dufferinhiland

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, to and from trail heads, and three meals a day with accommodations.

For prices and information contact Isabella and Bill



Phone: 1-709-334-2208 Fax: 1-709-334-3601  
[www.brownrabbit.nl.ca](http://www.brownrabbit.nl.ca)  
email: [brownrabbitcabins@gmail.com](mailto:brownrabbitcabins@gmail.com)

