



The Newsletter of the Beaver Valley Bruce Trail Club Box 3251 Meaford Ontario N4L 1A5 / www.beavervalleybruce trail.org

The Zen of Garlic Mustard Picking

by Joan Nuffield

As I picked **Garlic Mustard (GM)** in the beautiful forests of the Beaver Valley this spring, two thoughts occurred to me.

First, I was seriously ticked off, but not surprised, that last spring's scant crop of GM (not that we were complaining) had not in fact been "the beginning of the end" of this varmint for us, as was confidently predicted would happen after our Club's five straight years of picking GM at certain Beaver Valley sites. After all, the first time I met Linda Pim, trail captain for the Len Gertler Side Trail within the Len Gertler Memorial Loree Forest, she told me that she was still pulling GM on her half-acre property -- after 15 years. (But she also says that there's far less of it now.) And I had done my research.



Garlic Mustard Varmints in full flower

I had also come to develop a steadily simmering rage towards GM because I had seen just how successful an invader it is: fast, tenacious, clever (its seed pods literally explode, spewing its seeds far and wide), allelopathic, merciless, all-consuming.

(For those of you who are new members, or new to the glorious saga of the Beaver Valley Club's struggles with GM, a quick run-down. We asked land stewards and trail captains to walk their properties to give us an overview of GM's reach in the Beaver Valley, and since 2014, our dedicated volunteers have been pulling GM in various spots around the Valley, including but not limited to the Kolapore, Old Baldy, Hogg's Falls, and Loree. Scores of bags of this invader have been hauled out over the years. The BTC biologists, Adam Brylowski and Brian Popelier, assured us that our "crop" would be negligible in 2019, and so it was. But it was also negligible in areas where we had not been picking, said our MNRF contact: it was the weather, he said. And sure enough, GM is back in force in 2020.)

So you can see why I might be ticked off. Or at least feeling just a little cranky as I stared at this year's vile crop.

But the second thought that occurred to me this spring was how beautiful the whole thing was. Here we were, each day, our little party of women and the occasional man (since no power tools are required to pick GM, the activity is of little interest to most men). The absence of power tools, though, also yields a huge advantage: the silence. It allows for conversation among GM pickers who are working the same area. It also allows for solitary contemplation, and my mind turned to thoughts about the apparent futility of this effort.

But kneeling, bending or sitting in a forest, surrounded by beauty and silence, after a while that first feeling fades. The good humour and conviviality of the group is heartening, entertaining, and fun. After a while, it is the experience itself of the effort among these like-minded volunteers that becomes the purpose. Expectations of failure and success become irrelevant. Like a veteran Toronto Maple Leafs fan, one gradually learns a kind of radical non-attachment to outcomes. Out of the pain is born peace of mind.

Sincerest thanks to all our determined volunteers for making this a peaceful and fun GM season .

"If anything is worth doing, do it with all your heart. The root of suffering is attachment. People with opinions just go around bothering each other." -- Buddha

Beaver Valley Bruce Trail Club

Officers and Support Volunteers

To contact the Club, or any of its Officers or Support Volunteers personally, please write to:
info@beavervalleybrucetrail.org
 and your inquiry will be directed to the right person.

Directors

President	Jill Smith-Brodie	Land Stewardship	Mike Osborne
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Emergency contact: For trees down on the Trail, etc., please contact Blain Horsley at info@beavervalleybrucetrail.org. 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 at info@beavervalleybrucetrail.org.



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 Kelly Killoran at 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, 2020. Send to Editor of "Beaver Tales" at 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 BTC's Lyndsey Wilkerson at info@brucetrail.org, if you want to switch to receiving the Newsletter electronically, and she will send you 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.

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

"Plans to protect air and water, wilderness and wildlife, are in fact plans to protect man."

Stewart Udall

President's Message – September 2020

by Jill Smith-Brodie

A big thank-you to all the Beaver Valley Club members who took the time to vote at this year's AGM, returning a full Board of Directors to oversee Club operations. It was early on in the pandemic when we realized we wouldn't be having our annual BBQ social and meeting, and the question was, what to do? Thanks to Jackie Randle at BTC head office we were able to plan a virtual AGM. Thank you, Nadia Dubyk, our Events Director for making sure we all kept to our deadlines, and Joan Nuffield, Margaret Yaraskavitch, Lilla Fodor and Irena Marinko for sending out notices and reminders to guide our membership through the process.



Congratulations to Irena Marinko, this year's Volunteer of the Year, and to all our Trail Captains and Trail Workers, who were most deservedly presented with the Keith Solomon Award.

This is such a wonderful time of the year to be outdoors, the sounds of crunching leaves underfoot, the spectacular autumn colour displays from various lookouts, more moderate temperatures and fewer annoying, biting bugs. Perhaps the perfect time to do that end-to-end you have been thinking about! To earn that end-to-end badge, keep a log (dates, distance, comments) and submit it to the Trail Activities Director. Given our rapidly changing times, always check the Bruce Trail website (brucetrail.org) or Bruce Trail App for possible Trail closures and Covid-19 hiking etiquette guidelines. We need everyone to behave in a manner that keeps themselves and others safe. Take nothing but photos, leave nothing but footprints, step aside for others on the Trail, and always respect local parking restrictions.

Carefully following government pandemic guidelines, work parties have been busy all summer rerouting the Trail, upgrading structures and flagging and preparing long new sections of Beaver Valley Trail that will take us off busy roads. A big thank you to Bob Hann, Trail Development and Maintenance Director, to his zone leaders, Neil McFadgen, John Burton, and to Blain Horsley for their hours of planning, organizing and leadership. And, to all those who volunteered for the many flying squad work parties who carried out all those plans. Thank you all for making the Beaver Valley Bruce Trail a top-notch section of Trail.

The Beaver Valley Club's Board of Directors and associated committees have been holding all scheduled meetings via Zoom. Currently Board members are working on the Club's Strategic Plan for the next three years. As several Board members will be retiring or moving to a different portfolio in June 2021, a major aspect of the plan will be the recruitment of new Board members. Our nominating committee welcomes submissions for the following positions: President, Publicity and Communications Director, Events Director, and Land Steward Director. Board portfolios are not filled in isolation. Teams of support volunteers assist as needed. Board Directors maintain a file of support documents that provide archival data to assist with current and upcoming tasks. Interested individuals can contact us at info@beavervalleybrucetrail.org.

The 30th Edition of the *Bruce Trail Reference - Map and Trail Guide* is now available for online purchase at: brucetrail.org. Local bookstores and the Ravenna General Store also sell copies.

Many of the activities and gatherings that we all enjoy are temporarily suspended, and for now we take each new day and week as it comes. None of us can predict how this will play out, so please keep checking the Beaver Valley Club's website, beavervalleybrucetrail.org, and check out the monthly editions of *Beaver Bytes* for the latest news regarding hikes and activities. If you are not receiving these, then email us at info@beavervalleybrucetrail.org and let us help you.

"Adopt the pace of nature. Her secret is patience."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Jill



The Trail Trials of Covington (Cove) Bryce

Cove, spaniel extraordinaire and companion to Peter Bryce, trail worker extraordinaire, appears to have mastered the art of reading trail blazes ... until something more interesting comes along. Like a treat and a photo op.

Cove demonstrating correct reading of blazes



... but he seems to prefer the weeds to the Trail








Dazzling Volunteer Opportunities Await You in 2021!

Yes, the hiking season is entering its final stretch, but we are always looking ahead. Here is your chance at fame, fortune, and public adulation! (Or at least a little fun.)

In 2021, there will be openings for the following positions:

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In Memoriam: Ross McLean

The Bruce Trail is the result of the work of a lot of people. Each club has responsibility for the development and maintenance of its own section of trail and in the main uses its own volunteers to get the work done. Sometimes, however, a club reaches out beyond itself and its own people to bring in others to assist with the work. The organization has always been blessed by exceptional individuals who are ready to work anywhere, at anytime and do anything to ensure that the Bruce Trail is the best it can be. Ross McLean was one of those people. A significant part of his life was dedicated to it.

Ross died a few weeks ago. He was a friend of mine and when I heard that he was nearing the end and moving into a hospice I sent him a short note. I don't think he'd mind my sharing it. Maybe it'll serve as a kind of eulogy.

Hi Ross,

We haven't been in touch for a while; maybe we're both slowing down a bit, as hard as I find that to believe.

Heard yesterday from Linda Pim via our Beaver Valley president, Jill Smith-Brodie, that you were making some living arrangement changes.

That news brought flooding back some wonderful memories of our Trail efforts together over the years, particularly the work in the Beaver Valley that would eventually become "The Falling Water Trail". When the concept of that extension first came up I remember thinking, "Can we do this?" Then you and Chris Walker showed up and the answer became obvious, "Of course we can!". Throughout my career in the education "business" (which of course was yours too) I'd seldom experienced such a synergistic effort on the part of so many individuals and groups as that one. And there was always a joy in it.

I retain so many images from the countless individual outings and work parties necessary to complete that project over, what was it? five years? One that remains clear and bright is my arriving early in the morning at a prearranged time and location for a day's work (early property reconnaissance, exploring trail possibilities, flagging new routing possibilities, preliminary lopping, pre-nuking, nuking, or whatever) and finding you, having driven up from Guelph, sitting in a chair beside your vehicle, with a book, waiting for us local laggards to show up. That is so clear perhaps because it happened so often. You were always first there, eager to get at it.

Ross, your enthusiasm never flagged; it was infectious. And you never stopped talking about the possibilities; I can still hear your voice off in the distance in the bush talking to Chris or one of the other workers, the sound of it reassuring me and others that we were indeed going to get this done and when it was done, it would be marvelous. And of course we did, and it was.

Thanks for the memories, Ross, for the friendship and for the huge influence you had on the building of the Trail (and not just in the Beaver Valley) and on so many of the volunteers who helped build it.

With love, from an old friend.

Jack Morgan



Ross McLean

CORRECTIONS CORNER

Bloodroot Blunder

In the Spring, we printed a lovely article about spring ephemerals by Barbara Palmer. Barbara subsequently informed us that we had actually used two photos of hepatica, mislabeling one of them bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadense*). The error was entirely *Beaver Tales'*.

Barbara sends along this photo of a REAL bloodroot, below.



Trail Talk: On the Trail Again in Beaver Valley!

by Glenda Collings, Trail Activities Director

The Bruce Trail Conservancy, in conjunction with its individual clubs, has developed a protocol for safe guided hiking during these Covid-19 times. As a result, hike leaders from Niagara to the Bruce Peninsula have been returning to the trails and now it's Beaver Valley's turn. All of us have our own level of comfort towards social situations and our club feels strongly that no hike leader should feel obliged to take on guided hikes during this time. So we will have a limited hike schedule beginning later this month, with hikes led by those leaders who are comfortable with the safety protocols and being with other folks on the trail.

We're looking forward to reconnecting with Bruce Trail members in our area and enjoying the beauty of the Beaver Valley in all its splendour.

If you're interested in joining us for a hike, please check out the Bruce Trail Conservancy guidelines for hikers participating in group hikes and check the online calendar soon for our club's scheduled hikes:

<https://brucetrail.org/pages/explore-the-trail/hike-schedule#guidelines>

And we'll see you later this month!

Stew Hilts wins Ontario Nature Conservation Award

Ontario Nature announced its latest Conservation Awards recently, and our very own Stew Hilts, former Director of Land Stewardship for the Beaver Valley Club and guru to many an eager young (or not so young!) recruit, was given the **Ontario Nature Achievement Award** "for his lifelong commitment to conservation and his dedication to helping Ontario Nature to achieve its goals."

A richly deserved honour. Congratulations, Stew, from all of us!



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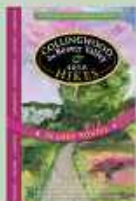
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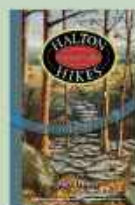
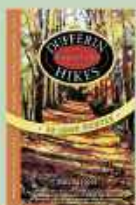
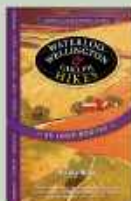
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DREAMING OF 2021

We are optimistic that we can return to offering you exciting hiking adventures in 2021!

If you have your heart set on a particular destination and want to book it immediately when it becomes available and safe to do so, ask to be put on our [INTERESTED LIST](#).

We will notify you as soon as we are ready to accept reservations for that particular trip. There is no obligation on your part, nor does it guarantee your spot(s). We will still be taking reservations on a first-come, first-served basis as we always have. However, it means that you will be notified right away that we are ready to begin taking reservations, and then you can decide if you wish to book or not.

We are working on modified terms & conditions in the short term to allow for more flexibility, so that you can confidently book a holiday.

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 Tour du Mont Blanc
 Galapagos Islands * Slovenia**

IN THE MEANTIME...

We would love to keep you engaged until we can travel again. Here are 3 easy to keep in touch that would benefit us both:

1. Follow us on Facebook.

We post daily on topics such as hiking tips & tricks, travel information, gear reviews, trip announcements and so much more. Plus we're pretty entertaining 😊

2. Please tell your friends about us!

You can even earn travel rewards.

3. If you've travelled with us, please write a review on our [Facebook page](#). Nothing we like more than satisfied hikers!

Be safe. Be kind. Stay hopeful.

And we look forward to hiking with you all again soon!

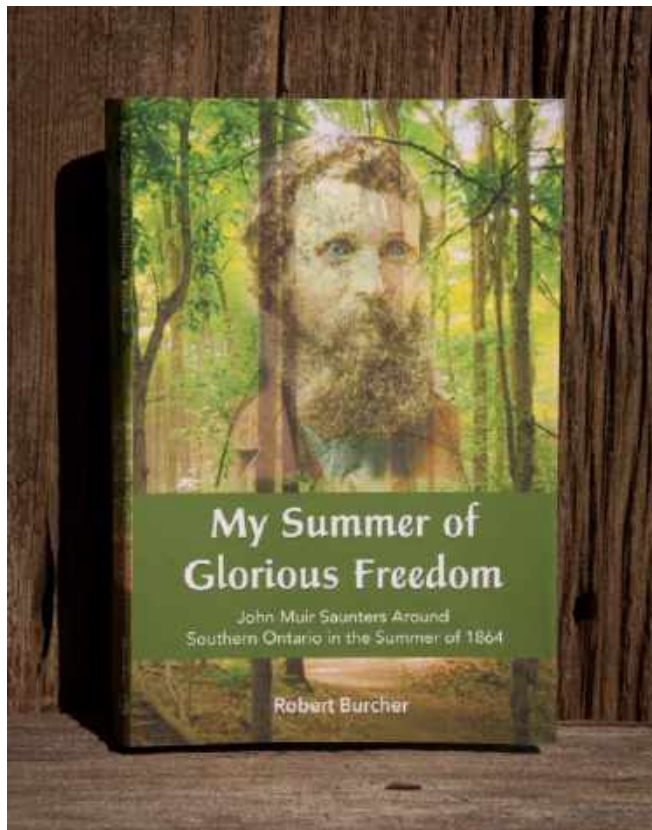
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“My Summer of Glorious Freedom”: Robert Burcher tracks John Muir into Meaford

It took a pandemic to bring to print the book Robert Burcher has been dreaming about for 30 years.

Like so many Canadians, local author and photographer Burcher is a big fan of John Muir, the American naturalist who spent time in southern Ontario in 1864-5, including in the Meaford area. Muir’s diaries and other notes from his time “botanizing” in the area were, famously and tragically, lost in a fire in the sawmill where he settled and worked for a time in Trout Hollow, Meaford.

Over the years, Burcher became particularly obsessed by the question of what route Muir would have taken from his native Wisconsin in order to wind up in Trout Hollow when he did. Peter Trout, of the sawmill owner family, wrote later that Muir had come into Meaford via Michigan and Sault Ste Marie. Convinced that was unlikely if not impossible in the time frame and weather conditions, Burcher set out to retrace Muir’s likely route from his home. With his research of many years done, and Covid-19 messing with the wonderful world of publishing, Burcher was told that he had a one-month window to get the book edited, printed and out in early 2020, and he grabbed at the chance. Thus we have “My Summer of Glorious Freedom”, Burcher’s latest in a series of far-flung adventures. The title refers to Muir’s description of his summer in the Beaver Valley area.



Burcher drew on a number of sources and skills to piece together Muir’s probable route: the labels on his botanical samples shipped back to the U.S., Muir’s own writings as well as biographies of the man, old maps, local museums and archives in various Ontario towns, logic based on distances, road and weather conditions, the habitat of the plants Muir found, and a fertile imagination. Over a five-year period, Burcher created his own series of plant-press specimens to match many of Muir’s discoveries, visiting the various locales Muir is known to have travelled and worked.

The result is a curious mix of travelogue, mystery, suspense, treasure hunt, historical details, homey local colour, sad reflections on environmental degradation, and, not incidentally, homage to the Bruce Trail. Fans of the Trail will love the many references to some of our most beautiful sections, as Muir is regarded as the “patron saint of the Trail”. Beaver Valley members will recognize a few of our most distinguished volunteers in some of the photographs, especially of the restoration of the John Muir dedication at Epping.

There are a few hairy moments, as when Burcher is almost sucked down into a watery grave, and some funny ones too, as when Burcher gives up looking for Muir’s honey locust grove near Hamilton, only to find the bench he is sitting on is surrounded by honey locust pods that have dropped from the trees above.

The book is, in fact, a little like Muir himself, a mosaic of different elements. Muir was a botanist, inventor, farm labourer, Bible scholar, sawmill worker, Sunday school teacher, diarist and writer. Burcher describes him as “a driven man”.

“My Summer of Glorious Freedom” can be found at the Kimberley General Store, the Meaford Museum, the Thornbury Review Office on Louisa Street, and the Wild Stand in Collingwood.



What is a Trail Captain?

by Bob Hann

Recently I was asked by Dave Moule (the volunteer BTC-wide TD&M Director) to lead a project with the TD&M Directors of all nine Clubs to develop a job description for a Bruce Trail “Trail Captain” (TC).

I agreed because our own Beaver Valley TD&M management committee has for some time been noticing that the trail maintenance and development workload in the Beaver Valley has been growing from year to year, and that an increasing proportion (over 50% at times) of the work has been performed, not by TCs on their own Trails, but by special support squads (e.g., mowers, sawyers, flying squads, whipper-snippers, etc.) staffed by volunteer Trail Workers—only some of whom were also TCs.

The question of what to expect from existing and newly recruited TCs—and, by some Zen-type subtraction methodology—what to expect from these support crews—was becoming more relevant every day.

Easy to solve, right? First, I checked the job description that has already been created in our own Club. Unfortunately, there isn't one. OK, then I had the second option of checking what tasks most of our TCs have responsibility for. No luck there either, since there is a huge variation. At one extreme are those who have been told that their job is to visit the Trail once in the Spring and once in the Fall, refresh the blazes, trim some foliage and submit a Trail Status Report for the BTC lawyers. At the other extreme, are those who visit their Trails many times a month throughout the year and take it as an insult if we suggest they might need help with maintenance tasks. Time for my third option. I tried the BTC website. Another dead end, since the TC job description there does not fit our Club's needs, nor does it reflect the way our Club is organized, both within TD&M and with our separate Land Stewards and Landowner Ambassadors.

Not one to despair, I tried option four: I asked the other eight Clubs. The good news is that the other TD&M directors were incredibly helpful in describing what their trail captains did. The bad news (if one were looking for a one-size-fits-all simple answer) was that there was as much variation in practice from one Club to another as there was within our own Club.

All of this has led to a scary conclusion: we will have to do a lot of thinking and discussing, both within our own Club and among the other Clubs. Further, although it is early days, I suspect the question to which we should be seeking an answer is not, “What is the job description of a BTC Trail Captain?”, but “How should Clubs determine what a particular Trail Captain's responsibilities should be?” Further, I suspect the answer will vary according to a lot of factors, including: the way the Club is organized, the types and levels of volunteer resources available, the nature of the trail in question—and perhaps the skills, interests and Club history of the TC. Of course, a major over-arching consideration might also be the standard of trail maintenance the Club wishes to attain.

I have clearly foolishly taken on a task beyond my capabilities ... That said, I am serving notice that in the very near future I will be asking for help from all members of the TD&M team. Please keep checking your in-boxes.



The newly righted bridge and wondrous new railing on the TM02 Section, near Loree. The motley work crew who made it happen, l. to r.: Cliff Kachaluba, Blain Horsley (seated), Neil McFadgen, Lance Pask, and (not pictured) Bob Hann.



Report from the Director of Trail Development and Maintenance (TD&M)

by Bob Hann

So...what have we done lately?

Context and Thank You

Remember the “before times”? Our last *Beaver Tales* report was written when Covid-19 had only just begun to define almost every aspect of our personal and Bruce Trail lives. Since then, the TD&M team has played a key role in: (at the end of March) discouraging use of or closing our trails; then (in early June) preparing for and re-opening all our 65 trail sections, and finally (in the last three months) getting on with our “normal” job of maintaining and improving all our trails. All of this done with the threat of Covid always present.

My first message has to be a sincere thank-you to all our trail workers for their efforts in making all this happen with the level of professionalism, dedication and good humour that makes being one of them an honour.

Getting the Trails ready for reopening: If we ever needed proof of the essential part the nine Clubs play in the success of the Bruce trail, we need only look at the level of effort our own TD&M team mustered to get the trail reopened after the Covid closure. Between May 1 and June 11, **Beaver Valley Club TD&M volunteers contributed 816 person-hours to the opening effort**—with 320 hours contributed by Trail Captains preparing their own trails, and the remaining 496 hours contributed by them and other trail workers helping other trail captains by: chainsawing, mowing, whipper-snipping, flying squading, and planning and co-ordinating all our many special projects.

Repairing the Existing Trail

We love our beautiful Beaver Valley environment. However, that same environment often makes our trails unsafe. Luckily, volunteers were available to, for instance:

- repair an aging boardwalk on the Loree South Side trail
- bring in tractor bucket-fulls of crushed stone to counter the mud on the same trail
- level and install a railing on the main trail south of the Loree Forest
- whipper-snipper and mow countless kilometres of tall grass, wild chervil and other ground-based invaders of our Trails.
- Dispatched with chainsaws hundreds of dangerous trees already blocking or threatening to fall on the Trail.

Remodelling Trails to make Maintenance more Efficient

On the main trail north of the Beaver Valley Ski Club and on the main trail going east to GR13 near Epping, we moved boulders, eliminated hills and widened side-cuts to convert trails to being mowable with the Club’s riding mower—thus saving hours of whipper-snipping to control long grass.

... / continued on page 11



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Creating and Rerouting major sections of Trail

We:

- Completed the flagging, rough-cutting and GPSing of Phase II of the Stew Hilts Side Trail. (We are getting very close to having a beautiful new loop Trail on the Cuckoo Valley property.)
- At the request of the private landowner, rerouted the Main Trail on his property south of Loree and Sideroad 21 -- away from an area that was in dire need of regeneration
- Undertook the final one of our reroutes to improve our trail network near the Beaver Valley Ski Club
- Completed the initial flagging and rough-cut a challenging reroute of the main trail that will at long last get us off the dangerous portion of GR13 just south of the Artemesia/Euphrasia Town Line
- Are tantalizingly close to completing the scenic reroute on the East Mountain Property that will get the trail off nearly two kilometres of the Artemesia-Euphrasia Town Line and 4th Line A
- Completed the Eugenia Falls Reroute: We are especially proud of how we worked in close partnership with the Grey-Sauble Conservation Authority to plan and construct a major reroute in response to both the serious accidents at Eugenia Falls and the major erosion of a slope crossed by the original Trail. In literally a matter of days, we went from a danger of closing the Trail, to working out a plan with GSCA, to assembling a number of teams of volunteers and materials, to completing a major reroute that includes long sections of side-cutting of the hills and numerous sections of wooden steps. The result was a much safer and more scenic section of Trail. The result also underlined the importance of building strong ties at the Club level with our local governmental, NGO and private partners

Better Defining and Understanding our Different roles within TD&M

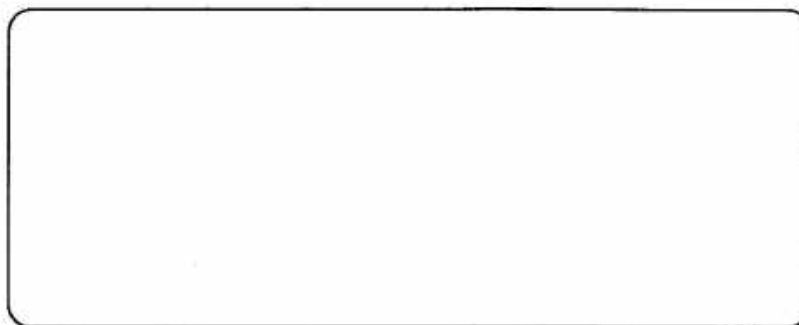
- After making the mistake of questioning someone's definition of the role of Trail Captain, I was asked to lead a BTC-wide project to define what that role should be, and how it might differ, not only from Club to Club, but also within each Club. (See a separate article in this issue for more on this project.)

What to expect next?

In the last *Beaver Tales*, I said, "In this extraordinary time, dominated by concerns about Covid-19, it seems that what we may most expect is the unexpected!" I was in some ways totally wrong. I fully expect that in the next few months, your TD&M team will continue to do what is expected. For instance, you can expect: before the snow flies, completion of at least two major reroutes (East Mountain and Stew Hilts Phase II); and major steps forward in the planning of a third and fourth (Johnson and Hogg's Falls).



Beaver Valley Bruce Trail Club
P O Box 3251
Meaford, Ontario
N4L 1A5
Canada



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Frederick Travel Waterloo

572 Weber Street North, Unit 1, Waterloo, On N2L 5C6

(519) 745 1860 ext 303

(800) 578 8958

e-mail to: scotta@ftwaterloo.com

Worldwide Central Trips

TICO: 50015067

Scott cell (519) 897 9673