

*Exploring the Rail Trails
of Nova Scotia's South Shore
with Martin & Cheryl Bell*



LaHave River Trail - Wentzell Lake

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Introduction

A few years ago, just after we retired we wanted to find a past-time that would provide us with enjoyment, help keep us physically fit, expose us to a little bit of adventure and not be expensive. So we decided to do some walking of the many trails available to us in Lunenburg and Halifax Counties.

This eBook is based on Facebook posts from our trail adventures between April 2017 and October 2019. Most of the trails that we have travelled are built or located on the former railway beds that once hosted a vibrant railway. To those persons who had the foresight and saw the value in preserving these right-of-ways for future generations, we say “thank-you”. All of these “rails to trails” are level surfaces and can be enjoyed by any walker. Some of these trails we have travelled more than once.



Many thanks to Eric Hustvedt, a fan of our Facebook trail posts, who organized all the text and some select images into an eBook format.

We would like to share with you some of our pictures and comments of just a few of the trails which we have travelled. We challenge you to go out and try just one.

Happy Trails To You,
Martin & Cheryl Bell

Conquerall Bank, Nova Scotia
April, 2020

Exploring the Rail Trails of Nova Scotia's South Shore with Martin & Cheryl Bell

The Adventure Trail

Eight Reports from late April through early July 2017

April 23 — This morning Cheryl A. Bell and I started to walk the Adventure Trail. We started in Bridgewater at the East Side Plaza and walked the Centennial Trail to Dayspring and walked the Adventure Trail to Oakhill and return for a distance of 6.9 Km.

We had our dog, Holly, with us. I used about 435 calories and we did it over about two hours. My plan is to walk to Mahone Bay in segments and maybe beyond.

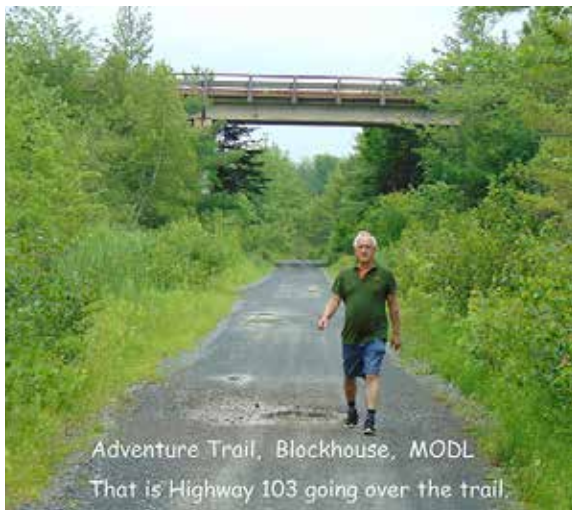


April 24th — This evening we continued our walk on the Adventure Trail. (leg #2) We started in Oakhill by the former Bowater Mill (near #334 Oakhill Road) and walked 3.4 Km {return trip}. I believe I used about 207 calories at an average speed of 4.0 km/h over 45 minutes. We ended up on Highway 325 near civic #2259.

Tonight we heard nee-deeps at various locations and saw several running brooks. We met three bicyclists, two ATV operators, and a dirt bike. It's so good to see different people using the trail in different ways. I must say that the operators of the ATVs & dirt bike slowed down and passed us in a very cautious manner. (thank you). We also met another pedestrian walking their dog and we stopped and briefly spoke. Our dog always likes to make new friends. < so 10.3 Km total so far>



April 25th — This afternoon we continued our walk on the Adventure Trail. (leg #3) We started in Oakhill on Highway 325 near civic #2259. Our anticipated 4 km hike became almost 8 km. Our hike today was 7.8 km doing a return trip. (we now have 9 km of 14 km of the Adventure Trail complete) So we stopped at about #258 on the Northfield Road which did not impress Cheryl. Next time she intends to check the map herself before leaving. However the trail provided a beautiful view of Blysteiner Lake along with some brooks and streams. The trail was busy with bicyclers and ATVs. There were two groups on bikes. There were eight ATV operators. Everyone enjoying the



scenery and this great outdoor trail. Our dog, Holly did the trip with us today and stopped to have a swim in the lake. I used about 508 calories and we did it in over a little more than two hours. < so 18.1 km total so far >

May 28th — This afternoon we continued our walk on the Adventure Trail. (leg #4) We started in Maitland at about #258 on the Northfield Road and back tracked 1.35 km. The sun appeared and we grabbed the warmth. We and our dog Holly completed our trail section from Oakhill to Maitland. The sites were nature at its finest. We saw two families of baby ducklings and 4 red-winged blackbirds. The bog was filled with lily-pads so Cheryl wants to return in a few

weeks. Our most diverse scenery was in this stretch of trail in the Maitland area. The OHV users count was 4 & dirt bike 1. Other pedestrians 0 & cyclists 0. It took us only 45 minutes to do this section and I used about 178 calories. < so 20.8 km total so far >



June 8th — This evening we continued our walk on the Adventure Trail. (leg #5) We

burned 549 calories, covered 7 kms beginning in Maitland near #258 Northfield Road and walking to #48 Moyle Mader Road, Blockhouse and return. We met 3 bicycles, 2 OHV's, one busy turtle and a deer. The trail showed us beautiful ferns, pitcher plants in the bog and frogs croaking. A slight



breeze kept the flies at bay during our walk and the setting sun over the lake greeted us as we arrived back at our vehicle.

June 24th — Today our Adventure Trail walk took us from #48 Moyle Mader Road, Maitland to #858 Highway 325, Blockhouse. Our trip covered 4.8 km, took us 1 hour & 15

minutes and I burned 308 calories.

Our morning was cool and the rain clouds held off. Everything smelled fresh in the woods as the rain had cleared the air throughout the past week and last night. We met one walker on the trail but no ATVs, OHVs, or bicycles.

The wildlife was quiet today but the flying insect types were active. We were taunted by moose flies and Cheryl took a bite to the head. (she got even with that one) The moisture in the air grew as morning turned to noon. Our nature observations included butterflies, a small toad, a snake and many dragon flies were observed over Langille Lake. We stopped at the lake to watch them and took a brief rest. We saw lady slippers, red “delicious” wild strawberries, and many ferns growing to a height of 3 to 4 ft. high.

Our dog Holly did not join us on the walk today so we picked up our pace a bit. The humidity at 12:04h turned us around at #858 Highway 325. (D.E.Barry Metal Works)



Our next section will not be thru wilderness but three residential areas in Blockhouse / Mahone Bay. We are keen for anything when everything is new.

June 26th — Our walk on the Adventure Trail this evening lead us thru Blockhouse to 187 Long Hill Road, Mahone Bay. With Holly, our dog, along for a cool evening walk. We covered 6.9 km, burned 427 calories and took 1 hour and 40 minutes. Water for hydration at 375 ml. (So we have walked from Bridgewater to Mahone Bay and back so far – 39.5 km)



The wild rose bushes that climbed at least 9 feet high up trees and whatever else they could climb were in full bloom. They were beautiful in both white and pink. The trail went thru residential and wooded areas. We saw 3 ATVs, 1 bicyclist, our first baby stroller & mom and a lady walking her dog. There was no wildlife to be seen but the roses were a real treat and lined most of our route.

The trail seemed to place us in Mahone Bay sooner than we expected. {44° 27' 18" N 64° 24' 12" W} We were walking east tonight & then returned. The walking surface of the trail went from sandy and soft to solid clay surface. A perfect cool evening for a walk. We started and

ended at 44° 26' 22" N 64° 25' 41" W or #858 Highway 325.

July 8th – Adventure Trail complete. Today our hike on the Adventure Trail started at 187 Long Hill Road, Mahone Bay. {44° 27' 23" N 64° 23' 56" W} walking east. While walking Cheryl & I met three OHVs, found another new fern type and happened upon a very large pile of scat. Is the bear still hanging around the trail in Clearland – Mahone Bay area? (I think we know) Deer flies were a nuisance today but we heard a bull frog, saw a squirrel and smelled the fresh scent of forest from the rain that fell last night.



Our trip was short today at only 2.45 km in 45 minutes and we now have the Adventure Trail complete at about 28 km return (+14 Centennial) and we done it in eight segments. With the heat and high humidity we called it a short walk with only 153 calories used. Next, we start the Dynamite Trail! We ended near civic 53 Welcome Street. {you know, that's only a 14 minute walk to the Saltbox Brewery – 363 Main Street, Mahone Bay}



Dynamite Trail

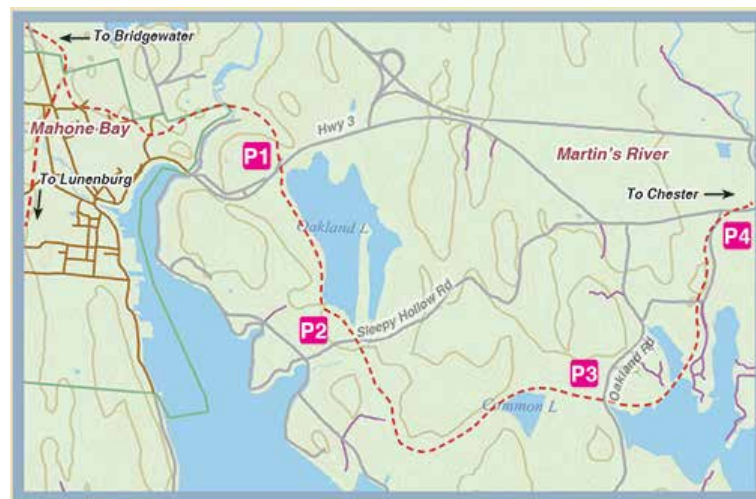
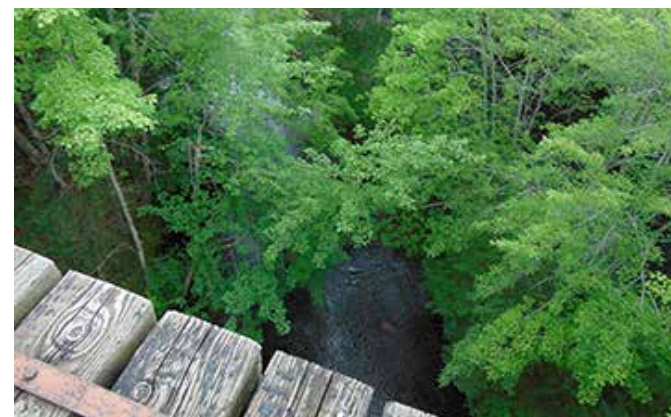
Five Reports from late July 2017

July 17 – So we started our third trail today at {44° 27' 10" N 64° 23' 25" W} at 30 m elevation behind Mahone Bay, near civic 53 Welcome Street. (travelling east at 120°) We are officially on the Dynamite Trail. It was cool with a breeze and sunny. We met two OHVs



and saw more beautiful trail foliage. We also met four cyclists. A tiny pink flowered bush reminded Cheryl of the small forest floor flowers called, "Brothers & Sisters". They were not good for picking as the stems produced a very sticky milk-like substance. Many residences can be seen adjacent to the trail and we snapped a photo of Bay View School as seen from this section of the trail. At 10 years old, Holly (our retriever/Labrador canine) may not be hiking too much more due to arthritis in her hip. (up to now she has done all 46 km) Her walk today was short and she was enthusiastic but she was slowing down so we stopped and allowed her to rest. It appears that the surface in this area has been re-done as conditions for walking are excellent. We noted

a great parking lot off the Clearland Road and there is great signage on the trail. I used about 283 calories in the hour and 10 minute walk and we covered 4.38 km of trail. (return) Our very special surprise tonight was a very high and very beautiful trestle bridge. Our photos captured our sight line at the tops of the trees in the adjacent forest. Of course we were over the Mush A Mush River one sees from the 103 Highway. In the places where we have travelled abroad to other countries, it does not match the surprise



and awe of the beauty that is around us here in our own area but seldom get to experience it. We both agreed that we could remember the train tracks as a child in these various communities and here we are 50 years later walking where once there were trains. A sobering thought that asks, why did we have to lose these masterpieces of transportation? The routes connect communities in such a well-planned manner it seems we zip through areas without effort.

July 22 – Our continuation of the Dynamite Trail hike today started at DM-105km and we walked towards the Sleepy Hollow Road in Oakland and we advanced towards Chester to DM-103km in Oakland. We crossed the Sleepy Hollow Road near civic #572. We met many people on this segment of trail. There were 8 bicyclists, 4 walkers, 3 ATV's, 1 dog and 1 snake. We thought it may be weekend travellers using the trail. A perfect day to be outside in the sunny, warm and dry day with a light cool breeze. The surface of the trail is easy for walking. We walked 4.9 km in 1 hour and 10 minutes and used 274 calories. (we had to walk in to DM-105km from Sleepy Hollow Road where we parked the car then back track) When the railways were built they avoided hills and Cheryl says that's what she loves. It was nice walking along the Oakland Lake today. Today we dropped off something called a geo-cache, at {44° 27' 23" N 64° 21' 28" W} at 40 m elevation. So if there is someone out there ready for a challenge and you happen to be strolling our route these coordinates might help you find a little treat that you can keep. <hint, #235 of only 1,000> Also between DM-104km and DM-105km. This was one of the best days on the trail yet! If anyone wants to join us contact me at Martin.Bell@modl.ca There is an area on this Dynamite Trail that a foot path of the Oakland Commons crosses the trail.



July 23 – This evening was a short trip of 2 kilometers between DM-103km and DM-101km (4 km return) and we had our retriever/Labrador canine with us. She loves to go with us. We only saw 3 ATV's tonight during the hour we were on the trail. Much of this part of the trail makes you think you are in a tunnel and then wow, there it is, a lake. The Commons Lake had a beaver working away and there is a bench to rest. Other finds tonight include a wasp nest built close to the ground beside the trail. There were a couple of small bridges that we crossed and then when you come out of the forest near civic 350 on the Oakland Road you see the salt-water Narrows Basin in Indian Point. On our next trail hop we will enter Martin's River. This was a great way to end a great week-end.



July 26 – Our walk tonight started at 8pm at Narrows Basin. (Dynamite Trail near civic 350 on the Oakland Road) We were dazzled with ocean views of Indian Point, water front cabins and beautiful homes. Total distance was 3.6 kms in 45 minutes. Our dog Holly walked very well in the cool tem-



perature and was very happy to be back out with us. As dusk was approaching we arrived in Martin's River and turned back toward our vehicle. The scenery which can be viewed on this segment of trail is priceless. No private property signs, just simply nature for everyone to participate in and enjoy. We used 186 calories which was quickly dashed by our chocolate sundays to celebrate a very breathtaking evening on this Dynamite Trail at ocean-side.

Dynamite Trail / Chester Connection Trail

July 29 – The temperature was 21°C

when we got up so today we hit the trail to intentionally cross off some of our must-see locations. We started at the corner of Long Cove Road & Station Road in Martin's River and travelled towards Highway #3 on our last section of this Dynamite Trail. As we passed the Martin's River fire hall we knew we were enroute for "The Bridge". While we thought it would be longer, it did not disappoint. The Martin's River Bridge gave us super views out toward the ocean and inland toward the forest. After we crossed the bridge I stood on my head in celebration of completing the Dynamite Trail. (Cheryl was not fast enough with the camera.) While we have now entered into the Chester Connection Trail, to travel thru Cheryl's childhood neighbourhoods, we will return to the MODL trails (But not before we cross the Gold River Bridge, at 367' long). Today's walk was 9.3km (return) and took us 2 hours & 15 minutes to complete. We saw 2 walkers, 6 bicyclists and 7 OHVs. There were areas on the Chester Connection Trail where the overhead canopy of the trees was trimmed away which became a bit warm in direct sunlight. The day was fantastic and we ended where the trail crosses Highway #3 near civic 6875 beside Alexander Drive in Martin's Point. We shall return to conquer the Gold River Bridge as we did over 40 years ago when it was a railway; not a municipal trail. We have now completed the Adventure Trail, the Dynamite Trail, part of the Centennial Trail and have started the Chester Connection Trail – it's an adventure!



Chester Connection Trail, Part 1

*Three Reports from late July and early August 2017
(See Reports from September and October 2018 for Part 2)*

July 30– We continued our Chester Connection Trail walk today at 1:30 pm in Martin's Point and walked for one hour. The temperature was about 24 °C and the sun was hot in the open areas. From this trail we could easily see the St. Mark's Church in Martin's Point where we were married 39 years ago. We saw 2 walkers, 6 bicyclists and 5 OHVs. We crossed the bridge at Barkhouse Brook (where we saw two youths fishing) and continued into Western Shore. We turned around and walked back towards our car when we reached the Western Shore Legion. After walking for just one hour we had covered a fair distance. (3.84 km) These railway trails are really laid out well for walkers. There are no hills and in most cases are shaded well for bikers and walkers. One thing we did notice was the noise from the 103 Hwy which is quite near this section of the trail.

July 31 – We started our walk tonight at 7:15 pm from the Western Shore Legion. {44° 31' 16" N 64° 18' 46" W} Tonight we did Western Shore, MODC [Municipality of the District of Chester]! The evening air was cool and we met many walkers with their dogs, (7 dogs total) one motor bike, and two OHVs. The railroad was Cheryl's route of travel to elementary school in Gold River (which was just torn down a few weeks ago), to Sunday School and to visit her Nanny Rafuse and friends. The trip tonight took us by all of these spots rekindling old memories. We ended up in Gold River after 2.3 km and that took us 30 minutes at which point we turned around and headed back to



the car. (so 4.6 km in 1 hour + 5 minutes) This portion of trail was good to walk during the setting sun. When we resume, our walk will include the Gold River Bridge which is 367' long. We walked this bridge in our younger life without the boards and only the railway ties. Don't tell our parents!

August 4 – We started our walk tonight at 7:17 pm at Gold River where we finished on Wednesday night. It was a good temperature for walking but we did not see any walkers and only 1 motorbike. There are signs of blueberries and choke cherries ripening. In the area of {44° 33' 21" N 64° 19' 45" W} the trail has not been cut back and the surface is showing signs of wear. As with the other trails we have walked, there is evidence of a dry summer, with very little water beside the trails. We snapped a picture at the Gold River trail bridge and the river is drying up noticeably. This was the high point of the night in more ways than one. Looking west you can see the bridge for Hwy 103 and a great view looking east or west. After crossing the trail bridge we walked up to Croft Road, turned around and back to our parked car. By the end of the evening we had completed 5.9 km, used 376 calories and it took one hour and 30 minutes. Our plan now is to return to the Mahone Bay area and do the Bay to Bay Trail out through Martin's Brook to Lunenburg and out to Garden Lots. Our evenings are shortening quicker than we thought they would. Maybe the Bay to Bay will be more open for added light filtering through. It was about 40 years since I walked that Gold River bridge.



Bay to Bay Trail

Six Reports from August 2017



Bay to Bay Trail - Mahone Bay
{44° 26' 34" N 64° 23' 3" W} ^SE

August 8 – We now have 88 kilometres of trail walking complete over the Centennial Trail, Adventure Trail, the Dynamite Trail and the Chester Connection Trail. Today we returned to 187 Long Hill Road, Mahone Bay where we parked the car. We walked in towards the east for 1.3 km to {44° 27' 13" N 64° 23' 41" W} where

we started the Bay to Bay Trail walking south. It branches off the Dynamite Trail and enters the Town of Mahone Bay. After the first 0.5 km you end up at {44° 27' 7" N 64° 23' 35" W} on Main Street, Mahone Bay. (that's the #325 from Blockhouse). The trail goes down behind Kinburn Street on the town line towards Hawthorn Road. Several areas of this section had park benches and we saw a lovely bridge as shown below with a stone wall placed for reinforcement. We saw 1 walker, 2 bicyclists and 4 dirt bikes. (1 that needed a muffler) Over the trees we could see a church steeple in the town known for its churches. Our hike today lasted 1 hour and 10 minutes plus 20+ minutes to get to the trail beginning. The trail crossed Main Street, Hawthorn Street, and we ended up on Fauxburg Road. During our hike this evening we passed a tennis court and also came upon our first cemetery. Time well spent and we were finished by 8:30pm.



Heading south towards Lunenburg
{44° 27' 13" N 64° 23' 41" W}
Starting the "Bay to Bay" Trail.

August 11 – Bay to Bay Trail, Leg Two – Our total trip across to Schnare's Crossing Road was one of our longer hikes. We walked about 11 km and met 22 cyclist and 2 motor bikes. We did not meet any hikers. We saw 2 small snakes, lots of lily pads in the bog areas. The trail was equipped with 2 park benches (we used both to rest) which had plaques praising the efforts of Nancy & Kenneth Knickle and Alan Altass who worked on this trail in 2015. Cheryl found another railway relic to add to her collection. Today's prize was a heavy rusted bolt. In total we burned 784 calories being rewarded by a grilled steak on our own bar-be-que tonight. (It would



have been the Old Black Forest Restaurant but we had our dog with) So we enjoyed our steak with a bottle of Black Raspberry Merlot from the "Goudey & Lavin Vineyards". Our next section on the Bay to Bay Trail will bring us closer to the Town of Lunenburg. Perhaps the Tall Ships will still be there. When you look at the photo of me resting on the Alan Altass bench you see you are in a wide open area with a bog and pond on both sides. We could hear the odd dog barking in the distance but it was mostly a tranquil quiet spot setting in the sun with a gentle breeze. Sometimes, you have to stop thinking so much and just go where your heart takes you. About 1 km before Schnare's Crossing Road you will see three wood piles (wood art)

Thank you Cheryl for sharing my day.

August 13 – Bay to Bay Trail / Leg Three – Today we started at Schnare's Crossing Road on the Bay to Bay Trail at 2:07 pm; our loyal companion Holly was at our side. There was water in some mud puddles which attracted our dog every time. Needless to say, our car needed an interior bath. We saw 2 walkers, 12 cyclists, lots of cows looking through to the trail corridor and watching us intently; this was a first. During our 5.2 km walk we were active for 1 hour and 26 minutes and used 342 calories. We crossed under the overpass of Highway 332 and looked across to see the Natural Resources office at 312 Green Street where Cheryl works every day. So I say we are in Deans Corner, not in Lunenburg yet and Cheryl says we are! So, who wins this one? The usual site points which we use each day are not present on the rail corridor. Often times we have no idea where we might be. Without getting your usual site bearings it is a very different world filled with endless surprises. We saw the yellow rump warbler bird in a bog area today. Just like Donnie Wade said there are terrific looking sights on these trails.



August 15 – Bay to Bay Trail / Leg Four – We started our walk at Deans Corner and walked for 1 hour and 5 minutes return trip covering 4 kms. During our walk we saw several new things we had not seen before. At one rest spot there were two benches and two picnic tables. A plaque on the table explained the Lunenburg Academy which was in a clear view plane from our spot. (The school was in use 117 years before the province gave it to the Town of Lunenburg.) We encountered a deer which did not want to give us the right of way so we started singing and it walked away. Hmmm! We passed by the first Porta-Pottie made available on any of the trails. At the end of our walk we were standing beside a real train station (former) and it looked fabulous. Also on



the trail, many adjacent homeowners created ornate walkways, stairs and entrances onto the trail from their yards. We met 5 cyclists, 1 runner, 2 walkers, 1 dog but no OHVs. We also passed by the Lunenburg dog park which was very nicely done. Sorry you missed this trip, Holly. So we walked into town and then back out into the District. (MODL) Our next trip will be along the Sawpit Wharf area and we may make it a picnic-kind-of-day.

Aug. 17 – Bay to Bay Trail / Leg Five – Last evening we parked our vehicle in the parking lot beside the trail at the bottom of Kissing Bridge Road and got onto the trail. We intended this to be a short hike and only walked as far as the Sawpit Road because we wanted to watch the sunset from this remark-

able MODL public green space. The town has several picnic tables placed along the trail for folks to enjoy a place to sit down and peek out through the trees to see Back Harbour and look over at First Peninsula. The trail runs parallel with Highway #332. In one area Hopson Street loops down from the town beside the trail and there is a foot path over to Highway #332. There were Cinnamon ferns and smaller trees growing along the trail and we were visited by lots of mosquitoes tonight. The walk on the trail was about 55 minutes and we covered 3.3 km of trail return passage. This time does not include walking down Sawpit road to the Sawpit Park which is a waterfront area that allows water access to Lunenburg's Back Harbour and the Atlantic Ocean. The park has a boat launch, picnic and parking areas, benches, a privy and a wharf that you can walk out on and is where we took our last picture of the evening. (included in this posting) This park is owned by MODL. This evening we met 2 cyclists, 5 walkers, 1 dog but no OHVs. Looks like we have one more leg on this trail till we are down on Battery Point looking at the Atlantic Ocean.





August – Bay to Bay Trail / Final and sixth Leg – Our evening walk began at {44° 22' 35" N 64° 18' 4" W} Sawpit Road on the Back Harbour Trail at about 7 pm. The temperature on the trail was just right for walking which may have been the cooling effect of the nearby ocean. This section of the Bay to Bay Trail - Back Harbour Trail was easily passable but not as well-groomed as other areas. We walked 2.45 km during about an hour. We saw four walkers, six deer and no motorized vehicles or cyclists. Our passage thru Garden Lots gave us a glimpse of nearby homes, chalets and the Trot in Time carriage garage and some horses grazing

in the meadows. <http://www.trotintime.ca/> There were many mosquitos and one large wasp nest which was very active (when I was trying to get a photo I believe I got a little bit too close but I can run fast). Of course Cheryl just laughed at me. This ended our Bay to Bay and Back Harbour Trails of about 27 km (return). {44° 22' 35" N 64° 18' 4" W} An additional section called the Salt-water Marshes will be a short hike for another time. Next we will be heading for the Arthur Young Trail in Cookville. Its named after a retired fellow Councillor with whom I had the privilege to work beside.



Arthur Young Trail

One Report: August 29, 2017



The evenings are cool and getting shorter for daylight walks. Our trail tonight started at the Best Western Plus in Cookville, #527 Highway 10 and is called the Arthur Young Trail. It is a Municipal Trail (MODL) which winds down a steep hill to join with the Bridgewater Centennial Trail. During our walk we came to the major power line which crosses the LaHave River, between King Street and Centennial Trail and gives a spectacular view. We found many deer tracks, a wasp nest built on the ground; we saw one runner and two cyclists. At the point of joining the Centennial Trail, you can hear the rushing rapids of the LaHave. It was only a few weeks ago when the river was all but dried up. A section near the old fish ladder is marked "Danger" and keep back. Now for the climb back up.

Holly and Sherry didn't mind the

upward climb but I found it a little challenging. Our walk took us about 1 hour, we climbed 80 metres of elevation and walked 1.8 kms. This is not part of the Trans Canada Trail and very noticeably challenging with a rough surface and steep slopes whereas the railway bed is a flat solid surface and very little elevation. Next we challenge the LaHave River Trail towards West Northfield.



LaHave River Trail

Six Reports from September and early October 2017

September 4 – We now have 115 kilometres of trail walking complete over the Centennial Trail, Adventure Trail, the Dynamite Trail, Bay to Bay Trail, Back Harbour Trail and the Arthur Young Trail. Today we started the LaHave River Trail at the Cookville end at {44° 24' 4" N 64° 32' 45" W} and proceeded north up to {44° 24' 41" N 64° 33' 8" W} where we crossed north King Street or Highway-331. This is a shared-use trail between Cookville and New Germany. We walked next to the LaHave River and along Highway #10. While the highway noise was very prevalent, the sites at which we stopped to take photos and watch the lazy LaHave River, were an excellent escape from the traffic. With the sun lowering in the sky, the twinkling of light off the surface of the water was, as Cheryl described it, magical. She also spoke about how this new view of a meandering, slowly flowing LaHave made her wish that we could all make sure that the LaHave would always be taken

care of. This is a short stretch of trail but a real eye opener. If you stop at the Cookville Picnic Park, where Holly went in the river, you will see the river's winding route flowing from New Germany. We will continue our walk toward New Germany and will likely soon be seeing some changing colours with the leaves. One thing we have always noticed and talked about is the way dead trees fall into each other and rejuvenate the forest floor allowing many varieties of ferns and other vegetation to grow and flourish. Also the short sections we have encountered that are not the true rail-bed are showing signs of requiring continuous repairs. Whereas the rail-bed remains a solid, firm and flat surface for a very solid walking surface. Our walk took us 1 hour and 55 minutes and was 6.8 kms in distance. We used 446 calories and met 2 walkers. Cheryl loves being on vacation. Our





walk today at mid-afternoon, gave us a different spectrum of light to show off the beautiful LaHave. 591 ml of water was consumed by each of us and we had water for our dog.

September 10 – We resumed our walk on LaHave River Trail and saw the good, the bad and the beauty of the Acadian Forest along the LaHave River from Cookville and into West Northfield. Restoration of the old railway trail has had its challenges through the section we covered today. Some of the parcels of land were allowed to be sold before the “Rails to Trails” program was up and running. Currently the municipality (MODL) is working with volunteers and the province in trying to re-establish this route. So inadvertently Cheryl and I and our canine friend may have crossed some privately owned properties between established trails and had to walk along Highway 10 in some areas. We resumed on the trail near civic number

1257 Highway 10 and travelled to about civic number 1462 Highway 10 at which point we had to walk the highway shoulder till about #2049 where we left the highway and went back into the woods. Between #1257 & #1462 the trail is pretty good till about the #1388 mark where we are on DOTIR right-of-way. We came out near civic #22 on the Bruhm Road and used Highway 10 for a few properties as we were not sure as to ownership of the trail. We found the trail again at the rear of a meadow and continued on the old railway bed/foot print crossing a forest section and ending up near civic #97 on Salmon Run Road walking over 5 km. We saw a couple chipmunks, met one walker but did not see any OHVs during this coverage. The trail had muddy, wet sections which have not seen restoration work yet. We saw red maple, red spruce, balsam fir and pine trees. We did see some blowdowns, scattered bog sections and some puzzling fungus which I took some photos of. This trek ended at {44° 27' 13" N 64° 36' 21" W} which you can get to via Salmon Run Road off Highway #10.



September 14 – We started our walk this evening in West Northfield {44° 27' 13" N 64° 36' 21" W} and ended in Wentzell's Lake at Wentzell Road.



There was a spot to park our vehicle beside Salmon Run Road and our walk lasted about an hour to do 3.6 km. Tonight's walk took us through a mix of hardwoods and conifers, mainly red spruce, fir and birch. About 10 minutes into the walk we passed vertical rock faces where the old railway builders had to cut through the rock to pass. The trail swings close to the LaHave River's east bank and offers some great views. It's easy to tell that deer browse here as we saw several well-traveled paths crossing the trail. In among the forest we saw several cabins built in the woods, some close to the river. We both commented what it would be like sleeping in one of those cabins during the summer or fall with the window open listening to the water of the LaHave flow gently past. We never left the trail for a closer

look because after all this is someone's private area. Our photos from this evening's walk are of views you can only see if you are willing to walk the trails. Tonight we did not meet anyone else on foot or vehicle. It was like our own private trail with such beauty.

September 17 – We started our walk this afternoon in Wentzell's Lake at Wentzell Road. {44,4662, -64.6161} There was a spot to park our vehicle beside Wentzell Road. For this walk this afternoon we had our daughter Genoa to walk with us. We met two couples each with a dog and three groups of two OHVs and observed one lady sitting beside the trail in some shade reading a book. The trail ends by the Mic Mac Rod and Gun Club which is civic # 3085 Hwy 10 and 4+km round trip back to the car. Walking up Highway 10 you can go up to civic # 3423 Hwy 10 or in the area of the MacKean Road. I see what looks like the



old trail bed but we stuck to the highway as the trail area looks grown up and may be private property now. So, all in all, that's 8.32 km and required a Turkey Burger ice cream sundae to regain my calories lost. Along the trail on the upper end I see poison ivy, that climbing plant that secretes an irritant from its leaves. Wentzell's Lake was as calm as glass this afternoon and we had a nice sun shining down on us. It was a great walk.

October 8 – It's been 22 days since we were on the trails. This was a busy three weeks but today we got back to the trail walking and didn't let the clouds slow us down. A few sprinkles of rain fell but our 5.3 km walk was comfortable. We learned that the trail is missing between the MacKean Road and the Veinot Road. While you can still see some traces of the old railway bed it appears to be private property for the most part (such a shame). So you need to walk .89 km along Highway #10 between MacKean and Veinot Roads and pick up the trail around {44° 29' 59" N 64° 39' 6" W} and walk 330° NNW. As you walk up through Pinehurst you are next to the LaHave River in some spots and very close in other spots. You'll walk across a flood plain at several points. We could see the fall colours along the trail today. At the beginning we looked across a low area and could see a red barn over on the Osborne Road (civic #119). Lots of bright reds, oranges and yellows as the tree leaves are beautiful in their changing colours. We took several photos along the river just showing the beauty



along the LaHave River Trail. We met two walkers, one dirt bike operator and one seemingly dead snake until Cheryl touched it. We had all this beauty almost to ourselves. We walked up as far as (near civic #4082) Pinehurst, Highway #10 as we wanted to limit our walk to 6 km today and we could feel rain drops every now and then.

October 21 – Our trail walk today started at 4:30 p.m. at {44° 30' 54" N 64° 40' 28" W} (near civic #4082) Pinehurst, with the sun beginning to set. We walked most of the trip beside the LaHave River. With the sun lowering to just above the horizon, we were presented with a multitude of photo opportunities. The coloured leaves, the flowing river, the setting sun brought us another magnificent chance encounter with nature in MODL. Our photos tell the story. An amazing one hour of time can make you forget everything else. Since our 3.1 km walk used up 190 calories; our next stop was Swiss Chalet in Cookville. It was a great day indeed. We will pick up our next leg at Goose Chase Road which will lead us into River Ridge Common which was purchased by MODL in 2011 (near civic #4420 Hwy 10).

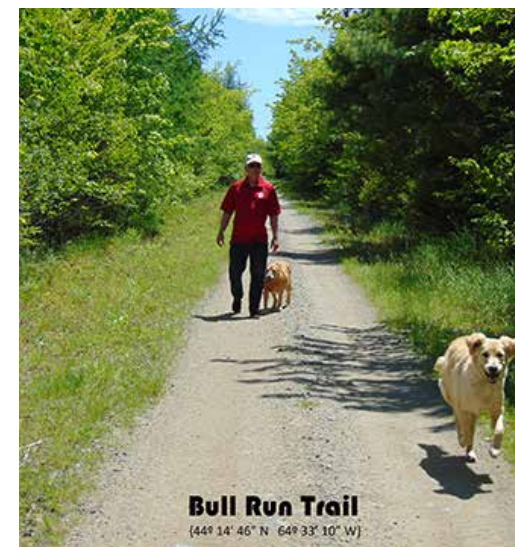


Bull Run Trail

Seven Reports from early April to early June, 2018

April 2 — During 2017, Cheryl & I found our trail walking adventures most rewarding. We called it our Sesqui-centennial Trail Walking Challenge but ended last season on December 29th 2017. Well today is April 2nd 2018 and we have started our adventures over again. We began our Easter Monday walk at {44° 22' 23" N 64° 29' 59" W}, walking SW at approximately 2pm in Hebbville. The Bull Run Trail was clear of any snow but many trees were downed by the heavy winds of winter. Our path was clear with no trees crossing the trail.

At 5° C the air was perfect for our brisk walk. Signs of spring were evident with the wild mayflower beginning to grow and new growth on established bushes & trees. London, our puppy, who is now 8 months old was excited to hit the trails. The fresh air gave us a good appetite for supper and a great start to working some inactive muscles due to our winter hibernation. However, it's great to be out hitting the MODL trails once again.



April 23 — The sun was shining and the temperatures are moving upward slowly. Off to the trails we went. Cheryl and I began our trail hike near 36 Bell Avenue {44° 19' 46" N 64° 33' 5" W} in Hebbville, continuing along the Bull Run Trail to Conquerall Road in Hebb's Cross. I note that this section has accessible construction that is barrier-free with a solid trail bed that would be great for those needing wheel chairs. Everyone was out enjoying the day. We met 3 dog walkers, 2 cyclists and 14 OHVs. Everyone we met was pleasant and happy to be out in nature and we all exchanged smiles. We saw mayflowers ready to burst out with a little more heat from the sun. We saw ducks, heard frogs croaking and birds singing. The trail backs onto the Blarney Stone Restaurant parking lot and ATV-OHVs were stopping to have a bite to eat at the popular restaurant. We walked 6.4 kms during our one hour and 33 minute hike.



Another sign that spring is here was the "open" sign at the Hebbville Tastee Freeze.



May 16 — Cheryl & I got back out on the Bull Run Trail this evening. It was 23 days since we walked the MODL trail. We started at 6pm near civic #38 on the Conquerall Road in Hebb's Cross and walked towards Middlewood. We turned around at civic #16861 Highway 103 in the DM189 block. That gave us 3.4 km in 53 minutes. During our walk we met two dog walkers and one youth cyclist on the trail. Saw some very nice ferns starting to stand tall. It's very unfortunate that in two locations along this section of trail we encountered dumping of garbage by some irresponsible individuals. I thought we might encounter black flies tonight but a steady light breeze provided a break from any flies. I intend to do a lot more walking in the next little while and aim to lose ten pounds around my waist line in the next 40 days. I am sure it can be done with a little luck.

May 19 — We were back on Bull Run Trail today with our two dogs. Our starting mark was at civic #16861 on Fisherman's' Memorial Highway. We met 2 OHVs on our route. Our walk lasted 55 minutes and took us 3.2 km ending at the Italy Cross boundary line (near civic #17218). There were a number of dragon flies and many beautiful ferns. Unfortunately another site with garbage was evident. (I'll pick up the odd coffee cup but not bags of garbage.) It stands out as all types of new life is abounding in the forests and in some cases, pushing up through garbage. Cheryl thinks wild blueberries and strawberries will be plentiful this year.

June 9 — We resumed our walk on Bull Run Trail today (Saturday) around noon. The sun and wind together made pleasant walking conditions. There were ripe wild strawberries which were sweet and tasty. The wild blueberries have formed but are not ripe yet. This section of trail has some of the tallest ferns we have encountered on our trail walks. While the Hwy 103 is very near this trail, the (repaving) construction on this section cut down on the noise as traffic was moving slowly. The lily pads and lilies are well on their way and the bull frogs are croaking a chorus. This is the time of year when we began our trail adventures last year. Our current aim is the Queens County line so we will have gone thru Lunenburg District municipality, Town of Mahone Bay, Town of Lunenburg and Town of Bridgewater. When this trail is finished at the county line we will return to New Germany and walk to Annapolis County. Our walk today was 6 km up to Somerset Road and return to Hebb's Cross line. So a big chunk of Italy Cross is done. Nature is our driving force to keep going. Today we passed Wallace Lake area around Feener Cove where we saw two individuals fishing. We met one dirt bike and 7 OHVs at various locations. A real good trail surface in this section and good for walking, so good that you could do this section in a wheel chair. We are fortunate to be moving; freely, peacefully and on super MODL trails. Thanks to the volunteers that maintain the Bull Run Trail. (23 km)



June 10 – At first our walk in the sunshine and breeze was lovely. We resumed our walk on Bull Run Trail starting near civic #52 Somerset Road {44° 14' 46" N 64° 33' 10" W} and walked to Hirtle Road coming out near civic #131 Hirtle Road {44° 14' 02" N 64° 32' 47" W}. We walked south-west crossing over Corkum Road and our trip today was about 6.5km. As the sun's heat became more intense with little shade the dogs were heating up. So we found this bench by a lake in Middlewood and sat for a break and a drink of cherry limeade sparkling water. It was there Cheryl noticed about six ticks on London's (our Golden Retriever) white fur. So we got moving again walking back to 52 Somerset Road where we parked the car. (Found more ticks when we got home.)

In all of our trail walks we have never seen the Lady Slipper grow along right on the trail till today. They are usually hidden in among trees, ferns, pine needles & decomposing wood. Got some photos of both pink and white Lady Slippers and one of two beaver huts we noticed and seen from the trail.

Also we have never encountered ticks. We are glad that London is white and the ticks were easily spotted. I hope none of them are residing in the back seat of my car. Oh, and yes Cheryl and I did a tick check of ourselves when we got home. All clear, none found. Our next leg of the Bull Run Trail will be from Hirtle Road to Llewellyn Road. While our trip today took us past the China Lake, never once did we see it through the forest. All, in all, a great two hours spent in nature. Back on the 16th of May I aimed to lose ten pounds. Well I'm half way there; walking is good for you.

June 12 – Many months ago we started in the north-east end and today we finished at the south-west end of MODL Trails. Last year we told you about Gold River – Chester Basin and today we went to the very end of Bull Run Trail. In fact as we got to the County Line Station Road we continued right into Queens County of the Trestle Trail. We did the first kilometre of Trestle Trail but the surface was loose rock and less pleasant to maneuver. So we turned around and returned to Hirtle Road area where we had parked the car. However, we did stop at the Llewellyn Road area where there is a picnic table and we had a snack. This last 6.5 km of trail is through the lightly-treed low land and offers little scenery but was pleasant and provided quietness to enjoy. We came upon a rabbit and watched as two deer played in a large meadow. Again we saw lady slippers growing along the Trail and large ferns. No ticks were encountered today. We did cross a few small bridges with flowing brooks. The last section of this trail was very clean, no garbage found and was recently cleared of any downed branches or trees. To MODL and the volunteers of Bull Run Trail, thank you for providing this local multi-purpose trail for all to enjoy. We did meet two OHV's today. In the picture of the picnic area, you will see my youngest sister Marilyn who joined us on our trail adventure today. Thank you Marilyn Neily for adding more joy to our trail experience.



Chester Connection Trail, Part 2

Notes from September and October, 2018.

(See Reports from July and August 2017 for Part 1)

September 1st 2018 – This section of the Chester Connection Trail is unique because the trail includes many long turn stretches with some overlooking the Halfmoon Cove and Mill Cove. We started at {4700 Highway #3, Chester Basin} and ended at {44.546929 -64.245613} which is at Station #20, Chester. Cheryl attended high school at Chester High. So when the trail became a continuous turn, she noted, “I think we are going around Haddon Hill”. Oh, and she was correct. From the trail there are numerous locations to view scenery, wildlife, flora, fauna and geology. During our trail hike



we saw 3 cyclists, 4 walkers, 1 OHV and a helicopter which lifted off at a private residence who had a wonderful view of the Ocean. When we arrived at highway #3 we were peeking out through a lovely canopy of trees and looking straight forward at the old Chester Train Station #20. It has been refurbished and looks beautiful. It serves as the Village Tourist Bureau, craft shop and site of the upcoming weekend craft sales and preservatives sale. We passed distance marker 78 of this 35 km trail (the 78 km is from downtown Halifax). Yes we are pushing on for East River in our next adventure. I am now 15 pounds lighter than when I began the trail walks.

October 5th - We began our walk today at the old Chester Train Station #20. {44.546844 -64.245620} or {44° 32' 51" N 64° 14' 39" W} The sky was clear, the trees are changing colour and temperature

was 18°C, a perfect fall day. We met 6 cyclists, 2 ATVs, 2 motocross bikes, a field filled with Canada Geese and 2 hikers. We hiked 9 kms during our 3 hour and 10 minute walk and passed many homes that I have never seen before because you can't see them from the highway. This trail today was amazing in that we passed by Graves Island Park so quickly, without knowing it. The railway tracks were so well designed for efficiency and speedy movement of goods and passengers. Just having returned from Alberta where the trains are still running and goods are still moving efficiently. It is

sad to acknowledge that our train tracks are now largely a part of history for the majority of Nova Scotians. I needed this walk today because last week I gained 3 pounds eating at restaurants a few times while on the road and not getting my walking in. We stopped at Duncan Road {44° 34' 5" N 64° 12' 59" W} where we turned around. Our trail walking took us across the Smith Road, past Stanford Lake, Target Hill Road, Maplewood Drive, Stevens Road, Seaside Lane and Old Trunk #3 Road. We will continue towards East River.



October 14th 2018 - A beautiful fall sunny Sunday. Off to the trails we go. Our starting point was {44° 34' 5" N 64° 12' 59" W} Duncan Road, East Chester. The Goat Lake Road veered off to our left as we walked along. There are sections of this trail where the sides of the trail are very high and we encountered hills and fairly sharp turns. This combination for constructing a railway must have been very difficult work. The first photo is on Henneberry Lake complete with a beaver dam. True to the trail sign we approached Goat Lake and behind it walking north towards Highway 103, also known as Fisherman's Memorial Highway. We noticed lots of deer ticks on the trail. The fall foliage with the lake was magnificent. We crossed Goat Lake Bridge #2 and Goat Lake Bridge #1 where fast flowing brooks and gave us a sense of the elevations to our left. We turned around at Hwy. 103, DM 242 in East River. We saw 3 cyclists, 3 walkers, 1 dog walker, 1 ATV and 1 motocross bike. We will aim our next trip towards the legendary Castle Rock as we are told, "We won't regret it", and it is probably the tallest hill in this part of the province. There are exclusive views both inland and towards the ocean. Can't wait!

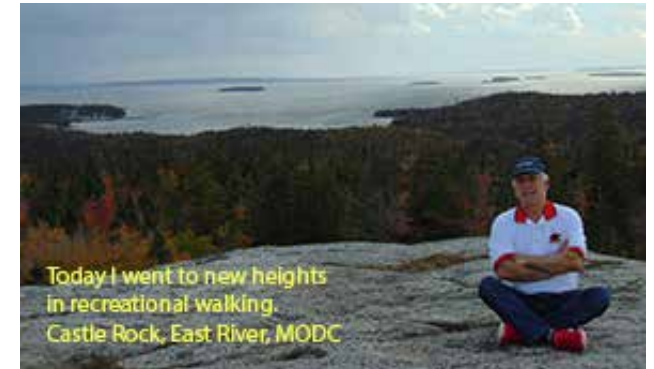


October 17th 2018 - Well now, this one takes our trail walking to new heights! As we continued our route towards Simms Settlement or the Aspotogan Trail we continued today on the Chester Connection Trail starting at 103 Hwy, DM242 in East River. Thanks to the Municipality of the District of Chester, they installed a big trail head sign that directs you off the trail towards the Castle Rock adventure trail. (it was on our left) My friend Chad Haughn stated that there are three different routes – Easiest, Moderate and Most Difficult – so that hikers of all levels can participate in the adventure climb. However, we hiked 3.5 kms before even reaching the Castle Rock Adventure Trail. When we got there Cheryl and

I chose trail #1 (Red) the longest but easiest route up through a retired Christmas tree farm. As we climbed the 300+ foot rise in altitude we had to adjust our breathing and Cheryl suggested I stop singing. When I say adjust breathing I only mean that with the extra effort of walking up hill it takes a little extra effort. I think she just didn't want to hear me sing My Lighthouse anymore, even if I was just trying to be a little more inspirational. When we got to the top the view was spectacular from the rock. We could see the Canexel Hardboard Plant to the left, the ocean and islands of Mahone Bay/ East River Bay expanse before us. The hike was filled with the smell of a new rain in the forest. During our hike we met 1 cyclist, 2 ATV's and one lady coming down the trail with a baby in a stroller who then had to walk 3 km's back to her vehicle. When we came down we took trail #2 (Blue) the mod-

erate hike. So that means next time we challenge Castle Rock we need to take Trail #3 (Yellow) the most difficult route. However, you can be sure that won't be this season because this morning my knee hurts and my back is telling me not to climb any more hills for a while. I only posted 9 photos but we took many more of the spectacular views. This 9.4 km day was well worth the effort and hats off to MODC who have kept this gem in their collection of green open space for all to enjoy.

October 29th 2018 - On Tuesday our ambition was to finish the Chester Connection trail and we did it today! This Chester Connection started in Martin's River and ended in East River near civic 2082 Highway 3. Our walk Tuesday was 5.9 km. The whole trail was 41 km X 2 for an overall hike of 82 km. This multi-use trail had a great surface for hiking, walking or cycling. Cheryl suited up in hunter orange and we started out near the CanExel hardboard plant. The common solid ground and wide surface of this trail made walking easy for us and our golden retriever "London". We saw numerous waterways bustling from the heavy rains the day and the night before. We crossed 3 bridges, East River Bridge, Barry's Brook Bridge #1 and Barry's Brook Bridge #2. The sound of rushing water on both sides of us was loud during our first 2 km's of the walk. The final 1 km in was a quiet lake which brought us to the Castle Rock trail entrance. I turned right onto the trail but Cheryl suggested that it would be too hard for London our dog. It was a bit overcast and I agreed that the climb would be on another day. So we turned around and completed our return to our vehicle. Thankfully we met no disturbed wildlife but London was a bit hesitant in a few areas which we think was because she sensed something that we did not see. We completed our 5.9 km hike in 1.5 hours and burned 377 calories. We will soon begin the Aspotogan Trail in East River [See pages 29-30] which goes right through to Hubbards. We are now at mile marker #65. We won't make Halifax this year, but hope to before June of next year.



Garden Lots Salt Marshes

Notes from November 8, 2018.

Today was our last trail walk of the year. We chose the Garden Lots Salt Marshes trail (MODL) among the eastern white pine trees. Now it was -10°C and was a damp cold but you can still enjoy the nature around you. We took our two dogs so the walk was only 1.6km but it was enough to burn off 110 calories. This area overlooks the Atlantic Ocean. Upon getting home we made hot chocolate and relaxed.



Aspotogan Trail

Two Reports: November 18, 2018 and January 3, 2019



November 18 2018 – We began the Aspotogan Heritage Trail today at East River around 2:30 p.m. and spent an hour & forty minutes walking about. {44° 34' 37" N 64° 8' 53" W} The weather was clear at +2° and we travelled over 6 km burning about 382 calories each. The trail was dusted in frozen snow from our Friday snow event but walking was good as an ATV had gone thru and the resulting tracks were clear. The animal tracks in the snow revealed a well-travelled area used by deer, fawns, rabbits, coyotes and possibly larger animals. We met one ATV and one cyclist.

We were able to see the ocean at approximately 2.5 kms into our walk and continued another .5 km before turning around. We decided to return to our vehicle via Highway 329 and East River Point Road so we walked along the ocean. The ocean was quiet today and the view was spectacular allowing us to look out to Snake Island, Big Tancook and Little Tancook Islands. We noted many sites where storms had ravaged wharves, deposited artifacts of all shapes and sizes on the shoreline. Some items noted were bicycles, tricycles, lobster traps, toys, lawn furniture; the list goes on. We enjoyed our walk along the ocean. Cheryl teased that perhaps our next

challenge could be “the coastline of Lunenburg County”. If that’s the case, I would like to start with the traditional Hell’s Point walking path out in Kingsburg. It is often cited by some residents that this historical footpath was established along an old right of way.

The “Rum Runner Trail” signs indicate we are 63 kms from Halifax. Currently our hikes



are being done with Cheryl wearing "hunter orange". The remote areas are not favoured at this time of year with the fear of hungry animals which are facing a long winter ahead.

We got a while to go till we catch up with Dana Meise from British Columbia; he just finished 21,000 kms of the Canada Trail. (He's only 20,680 kms ahead of us)



Jan. 03 2019 – Today I continued on the Aspotogan Heritage Trail in the -5 degrees Celsius afternoon. Wanted to do the trip from the 63 km sign to the 53 km sign and end up on Highway #3 in Hubbards. It's a long walk, away from any nearby homes most of the way, but I had the three hours required to complete the walk. My main issue was the ice covered trail and walking required your full attention but the sides had a little snow that provided footing when walking. Not a lot to see on this section of trail, mostly marshland and low areas and very few large trees. This time of year you can see Yellow Marsh Lake through the trees but this is a lonely section to walk. There are sections here where you can see over a kilometre ahead or behind you. It was at this point I saw a couple of visitors behind me come out onto the trail. As you see from the photo they were

the four legged type and made me feel uneasy. It did give me a reason to walk a little faster. Even domesticated dogs running at large with no master or owner present back here was a reason for concern. As they followed me I began looking for trees with low limbs that would offer a climb by one cautious trail walker if required. After 3 or 4 minutes my visitors left the trail never to be seen again. I soon came across Noonan Lake and Fox Point Lake which had a number of camps that could be seen. I crossed the "Fox Brook Bridge" and then saw lots of tracks of hikers and even met an older couple from Halifax that were out for a walk. We spoke for several minutes and then I moved on. Shortly after that I met three other individuals out walking by themselves just as I was. After a few hours I had the Aspotogan Trail completed (all 22 km) and set the St. Margaret's Bay Trail as our next challenge. We will start at 44.635986 X -64.072326 and walk to the Station Road. That should only be 1.5 km (3 km return) At least there will be nearby homes on this next section.



St. Margaret's Bay Trail (January-February)

Notes from January 6 through February 17, 2019.

Jan. 6th 2019 - Our hike today was on the St. Margaret's Bay Trail. (we had just completed the Aspotogan Heritage Trail) Walking conditions were a bit slippery but we stayed upright for our 50 minute walk. The trail was icy in the OHV/ATV tracks so we walked on the sides with the crusty snow. There were no other hikers but signs of skiers who had passed before us were evident. We noticed a squirrel cross our path but that was all for walking companions. We could hear traffic on the Highway 103 in the distance. A light snow fell for a short while but soon stopped. The temperature was -2° C and the skies were overcast. We noted large posts (rail ties) planted upright on the sides of the trail. We guessed it related to the rather sharp turn in the old rail bed. An interpretive sign at the end of the trail was an account from 1891 on who the engineers were, with notations that things were going well and the continuation of the railway tracks would continue with haste. We photographed this interpretive sign which held our interest as an actual piece of history related to the more than 300 km of abandoned rail-line over which we have travelled. Our 2.6 km walk burned up 172 calories. After our great walk and lots of fresh air we nestled in at the Four Way Stop Restaurant for coffee and cookies. A great way to spend a Sunday afternoon.



Jan. 14th 2019 - Our trail hike today took us from Lunenburg County (MODC) and crossed into Halifax County (HRM). We started at the Station Road and walked east till we came to the Queensland Lane. (equivalent to #9507 Hwy #3) The weather was chilly at -3° C but the sun was shining and there was no wind. The trails are mostly ice covered and walking is tricky. As we got close to the ocean (St Margaret's Bay) the trail was open to sunlight which gave us bare ground to walk on. We crossed Fitzroy Bridge over a fast flowing brook which led to Shankels Pond. We also were able to walk along one of the "sidings" where the trains would pull over onto. The gravel which Cheryl remembers being on the Western Shore rails is still present here on the Rum Runners – St. Margaret's Bay Trail Section. Again there were interpretation boards which were very helpful giving interesting facts



about our typical bog plants, our flowers, trees and forest edible treats such as wild blueberries, wild strawberries, etc.

Our total kms were 7.5, we used 500 calories and was breathing lots of crisp, fresh winter air during our walk. It took us twice the time as normal because most of the surface was ice covered and needed extra caution. During our walk we met one ATV and listened to birds along the route. We saw many footprints from animals and hikers but did not encounter any on our hike. As of this posting we have shared 275 of 600+ photos of our trail adventures.

Jan. 16th 2019 - Like I said earlier, if you want 2019 to be your year don't sit on the couch and wait for it. It's my time to go out and walk, and I do every day. I wanted to make some changes, smile and do new things. Well, I am, and again today Cheryl & I hit the rail to trails and spent a couple hours out doors in the fresh fair weather of -3° C. Now when I said hit the trail, that could of very easily have happened because the trail was a glare of ice. We began our walk from Queensland Lane (Queensland, HRM) where we dropped off Monday and continued to 44.644064, -64.006671 near the 46km marker. During our hike we took time to sit on a memorial bench placed along the trail by the Miles & Sanderson Families. There were many places along this St. Margaret's Bay Trail where you could easily stop and gaze out over the ocean. (St. Margaret's Bay) We could hear birds chirping but otherwise, we were on the trail by ourselves. We chose to leave a geocache along the trail with coordinates of {44° 38' 33" N 64° 1' 0" W}. It was unique to walk the trail and listen to the ocean's surf hitting the shore. Since our trail was clear ice ahead we walked down to Highway 3 and back to our car right beside the ocean along Seawall Beach. Our next stop was Hubbards Cove Coffee Shop for soup and sandwiches and of course a cup of coffee to warm us up. Great little menu and food tasted great inside this quaint coffee shop which is definitely worth a visit. (right across from Hubbards Library). During our 4 km hike, we used 264 calories, remained upright on the ice and breathed in crisp clean ocean air. This is how we make each day an adventure, stay healthy and do so on a very small budget. Life is good.

Jan. 27th 2019 - Our trail walk yesterday began at 1 p.m. at Queensland and ended at Black Point. (walking the rails to trails - St. Margaret's Bay Trail) We hiked for 3 hours, went 7 kms and used 459 calories & then sat on the beach! The day gave us one surprise after another. The best day for walking is when the sun shines and temperatures are just above 0 degrees Celsius. We had multitudes of encounters with 14 other hikers. The trails are free from ice in this area and we were moving at a good pace. We met 2 dog walkers, 8 ATV's, friends walking with friends and a couple who offered to take our photo for us.



Martin happened to glance sideways and noticed a geocache. So he also left one. We took a short side trip to Cleveland Beach to reminisce when Anthony and Karen had their engagement photos taken there. Our favourite family photo was taken at this beach. There was the opportunity to gaze out over the ocean and sit on memorial benches, one of which was in memory of Heidi D. (Bell) MacRae 1969-2009. At Puddle Bridge, we could look inland and see Puddle Lake, or look sea-ward and see Puddle Cove. In our opinion so far, HRM trails are very well used, wider than those we are accustomed to and very well maintained. The bushes are well cut back which is great as we were meeting many other hikers and ATV's. There were signs of horses using the trail as well. We were very excited with this section of trail. There seemed to be so much to fill your senses and we cannot wait till we can get back out there. We ended at Marker #43 on the Rum Runner Trail/St. Margaret's Bay Heritage Trail. {44.654122, -63.982798}



Feb. 4th 2019 – With the temperatures hovering around 5 degrees Celsius it was a day the trails were calling us. We started around 1:30 pm on this overcast day in Black Point and ended up in Ingramport. We did not see a single OHV-ATV today but we did meet seven other walkers. Starting point was {44.654122, -63.982844} White Cap Ridge and we turned around at a location looking down on the Ingramport Round About. The great thing about today's walk is that at many points we could hear the ocean surf in the close distance. At many points you could look out over St. Margaret's Bay and see pieces of ice floating. At several areas you are high enough that you are looking out over the roofs of the homes below. The trail is level and well maintained. Our total walk was 8.6 km and we would recommend this trail (section) to anyone that wanted sights, sounds, safety and easy



walking in a walk under 10 km. There were several areas ice flows (frozen brooks) ran out of the hillsides but did not affect trail surface due to great ditching. We walked past the site of the once famous old Lewis Miller Lumber Company now known as Miller's Landing. Our earlier lunch from Hubbards Cove Coffee Shop was used up and it had been a great day. Again we came across several benches placed beside the trail donated by families in tribute to departed friends. We did rest/relax to view the bay because we were not in a hurry to go anywhere.

Feb. 17th 2019 – The days are getting longer now and we began our walk at about 3 p.m. under a bright blue sky and brilliant sunshine. The temperature was 2 degrees



Celsius. Our two dogs Holly and London came along for the short walk. Our starting point was Ingramport and our sites were set on the trail bridge spanning the new Ingramport Connector Highway at the interchange down by Highway #3. The trail getting to the bridge was ice covered but two smaller bridges, one named "Kiley Bridge" and the other spanning another brook, were both clear of snow and ice. You get a great view of St. Margaret's Bay from the new large bridge. We were back in our car and on our way home within 1.5 hours. It was a short walk but fun with our 2 buddies at our side. First time we were out in six days as we both spent most of the week home with the flu. (bad stuff)

St. Margaret's Bay Trail (March - April)

Notes from March 24 through April 7, 2019.

Mar. 24th 2019 – Our hike today continued on the St. Margaret's Bay Trail and was a very special occasion. Our 4 year old grandson Liam joined us for our 3 km walk. We began in Ingra-
port under sunny skies and a temperature of 8 degrees Celsius. We had great trails to walk on as the ice is disappearing very quickly now. We met 4 walkers and 1 ATV on our hike. Our walk was complete after 1 hour & 15 minutes. Liam was up for the challenge and is an "Evergreen Club Explorer" at his Daycare. In one photo you can see he was our Guide for the day and he was a very welcomed companion. We are now just 38 km from downtown Halifax. We ended the trail in Boutilier's Point.



When we showed Liam an old railway tie and the gravel that was used under the rails, his response was, "you mean a train really drove here?". At the end of our walk we had refreshments at the, "Train Station Bike and Bean Shop". Liam liked the big caboose on site and also looking at the big metal wheels. It was not long before we noticed all was quiet in the backseat of our car after our refreshments. Our Guide for the day was now fast asleep. Life is good.

Mar. 25th 2019 – As we continued on the St. Margaret's Bay Trail walking eastward, our trail walk today was over two hours in duration. We walked 4 km and then turned around and walked back to our starting point. For reference points we started near civic 6494 Hwy 3 {44.663095, -63.955682} and walked to an area parallel with civic 6514 Hwy 3 in Head of St. Margaret's Bay. {44.673400, -63.924447} We are just 35 km from downtown Halifax now.

We had our trusty dog London along for the walk and she was very willing and able to keep going. We met 4 other dogs walking the trail with their owners. In total we met 7 people including a couple pulling a wagon with their young daughter. We also passed two homes very near the walking trail that had dogs in the yard that noticed us and announced our passing their property. The trail reaches high heights at times and there are numerous signs for steep banks and falling rocks. Stepping off the trail bed could result to a 20 to 24 metre drop (75 feet) This section runs beside and high



above Highway 3. However, the trail is very wide, has a very stable base with constant glimpses of St. Margaret's Bay. We enjoyed the sun, the fresh air and temperatures at 8 degrees Celsius.

Mar. 28th 2019 – We began our walk today at Head of St. Margaret's Bay {44.673400, -63.924447}. The trail headed into higher terrain but the trail itself maintained a level surface. We reached a section which had a long stretch of very sturdy fencing and we could see the sharp descent beside us on the right. (east) We gave all our attention to warning signs noting falling rocks. There are great views of Schooner Cove from the trail but then it swings inland and away from the water heading towards

Fisherman's Memorial Highway (103) beside Indian and Mill Lakes. We reached the Indian River Bridge where we met a walker and his dog. They were the only hikers we met. We noted the bridge resurfacing in 2016 was partially sponsored by MEC (Mountain Equipment Co-op). We located 2 geocaches on our hike as well as one lovely painted Lady Bug Pebble resting on an interpretation board which we left for a younger hiker.

There are many memorial benches on this trail. Thanks to the families of Keith E. Rhyno and Guy E. Rhyno, Sr., who were two great "woodsmen", and to the family of Brian A. Rose, who loved to ride this trail. We also saw benches in memory of Eric J. Peters; Jim Marriott; Billy and Alice Blinn; Janice Coles and Dawn Isenor. Many thanks to all who purchased benches in memory of these trail walkers. God Bless you all. Cheryl and I enjoyed the benches and when it's warmer we will bring our books so that we can rest and read.



March 31st 2019 – Sunday – We began our trail walk from the "Train Station Bike and Bean Shop" café in Upper Tantallon and walked back to our Friday finish point at Indian River Bridge. The trail was very busy today; we counted 21 walkers, 6 walkers with 8 dogs total, 6 cyclists and 1 jogger. The weather was perfect at +5 degrees Celsius and the sun was shining. Interesting sites were: a rail from the old track rusting away on the forest floor almost covered in mayflowers ready to burst open; 2 families walking together including 2 dad's with one dog each and two women close behind one with a baby in a snuggly carrier; 1 dog jumping into the lake (brrr!); and being at Miller Lake with a view point from the south looking north and seeing the 103 Highway on the other side of the lake. It was unique as we could see perfectly the water



dam & the water tower all from the trail. The trail was bare of ice but still mucky mud in some places. However this trail is very well used and was the most travelled section we have seen yet. We have covered 25.4 Km of the 32 Km of this St. Margaret's Bay Trail so after another 7 Km this trail will be completed twice. Our latest bridge crossed was the Northeast River Bridge. Since we always return back to where our car is parked, the above Kms become doubled for us. We covered 7 Kms during our 2 hour walk. We will soon be headed to the "Beechville Lakeside Timberlea Trail"

Again we saw several benches trail side donated as memorials to Gordon Gray, Mary Gray, Trevor E.A. Butler, Joan Whitman and Florence Shea. I take time to refer to these benches as I believe they add so much value to the trails especially for those who want to use the trails but might like to rest from time to time. Right Frank Johnston?

April 7th 2019 – We began our trail hike continuing on from the "Train Station Bike and Bean Shop" café in Upper Tantallon {44.694109, -63.886577} towards Lewis Lake. Once again this section of trail was very active with 26 walkers, cyclists (12), motorcycles (5), OHVs (4) and 6 dog walkers. During our walk we heard the first bullfrog croaking from a bog. Our Golden Retriever, London, became very curious but a little tug on her leash changed her focus. There were a few fast flowing streams which were very picturesque in the forested surroundings. We continued to hear the highway traffic flow but the Lewis Lake, forest, Hubley Mill Lake bridge and fellow hikers were positive distraction from motor vehicles. We noted the signage has changed slightly to St. Margaret's Region. Out last, "Rum Runner trail sign is DM 24 km. It looks like our next section of trail starts in about 1.7 km and is called, the "Beechville Lakeside Timberlea Trail". We thought we would finish St. Margaret's Bay Trail today but time moves on when you are having fun. We were out for 1 hour and 45 minutes and we try to limit ourselves to two hours on the trail. The, "Jerry Lawrence Provincial Park" which is a small picnic park and has an area specially developed for seniors and people with disabilities is close by our current trail. The park is bordered by Lewis Lake and Round Lake. We completed 6.7 Km today and are within 24 Km of central Halifax. Our final destination grows nearer and nearer.



April 14th 2019 – – Our Sunday walk began at the final section of St Margaret's Region Trail near Round Lake, {44.694067, -63.841926} Lewis Lake. We noted signs directing you to other trails which branched off the Rails to Trails which we are hiking on. This section of trail had the most bikers (26) of any section we travelled. I met Eileen Burchill biking on the trail with a friend. Eileen stopped for a minute for a chat. They biked out from the city

and were going for a meal at Cavicchi's Meats which is just off the trail. Using the trail you can get yourself to a lot of nice eating cafes. Eileen also noted that the trails closer to the city have very busy sections and are well used. At DM-21 {44° 41' 2" N 63° 50' 12" W} close to the post you will find a geocache, so look for it. We heard another bull frog croaking in a bog and saw the buds of hardwood trees preparing to burst into leaves. We have FINISHED another trail. Good bye, St. Margaret's Bay Trail, hello "Beechville Lakeside Timberlea Trail". So today we met 6 dog walkers, 30 walkers and 2 OHVs (which were going too fast) and covered 7.7 km in 2 hours and 15 minutes. We walked in full sunlight the entire way with a temperature of 19 degrees Celsius! Water was a requirement for our walk today. (more than 600 ml) What a great day!



Grady Bean Trail (Head of St. Margaret's Bay)

Notes from April 20, 2019

So you want to be a mountain goat? Well, when it comes to trail walking with a stimulatingly difficult effort may I suggest the "Grady Bean Trail" named in memory of Joshua P. Grady who loved to run that trail. The trail is located in the community of Head of Saint Margaret's Bay off the St. Margaret's Bay Trail.

There is more than one way up over the steep hill but I chose to climb opposite DM-33 off the trail. The walk will take you about 1 hour and 50 minutes. I will say I found the trail a challenge. It's been 19 months since I made this climb and you will use over 1,600 calories to do the 3.7 Km loop. If you arrive via a private vehicle leave Trunk #3 at Station Road and go up a couple of hundred feet and park your vehicle roadside. Enter the St. Margaret's Bay Trail and walk south towards Boutilier's Point. You don't have to go far till you hit DM-33. However, there are three or more foot paths up the hill. You can get up the hill on an OHV but I'm into walking. We started up the hill beside a brook but the water was too high to safely cross the brook so we came back down and took a different route. The forest floor is moss covered and there are hard wood and fir trees making a great forest. Today, there was a low ceiling of fog so we could not see very far. Normally you can look out over Schooner Cove and see for twenty miles. We met 4 other folks on the trail. A great afternoon spent with my son and grandson. After the walk I headed for Cavicchi's, 5411 St. Margaret's Bay Road, for a bowl of homemade soup.

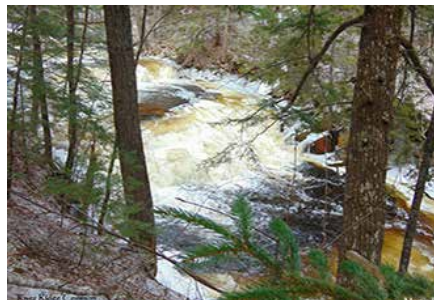


River Ridge Common

Notes from January 23, 2019



Today we loaded the dogs into the car and headed for the “River Ridge Common” municipal park. The temperature was about 0° C with the impending snow/rain expected tonight. We toured thru many of the large timber structures with amazement. There will be many hours of enjoyment at this park for both young and old. While the park is still in the development stages (and be aware, there are no trail signs yet), the area will be a wonderful spot to spend time in all seasons. We ventured onto trails that were very icy. So our 2.9 km walk with 2 dogs on ice took us 1 hour & 15 minutes. We used 226 calories (each). It is always an extra treat to visit the waterfalls. Our trip here in the summer was not like today. Take a look at the falls in the photo, now they are shining with a glaze of ice. This will be a massive playground when completed this summer. For kids of all ages.



The Bear Trap Ocean Trail

Notes from February 23, 2019

Our trail hike today took us to an ocean trail off Broad Cove, MODL. We took the south end of the Bear Trap Road-Trail and walked to Green Bay. If you like rugged isolation, surrounded by beauty where you can hear the ocean's waves breaking on the rocky shore, then this is the place for you. {44.183765, -64.462179} We walked out for 3.6 km over about two hours. You do need a good pair of hiking boots that will keep your feet dry. Erosion has done a hard play on this trail in several areas.



You can look for kilometers across the bay to see the ice covered shores of Indian Island 5 km away or over to Cape LaHave Island. We could see George Island which is more than 7 km away and when you look around you don't see man's footprint on this wide open space. We explored the shore in several areas as it was easier than walking in the snow in the forest area. We have not done this trail in over ten years. We did meet two other walkers and two OHVs but other than that we had a private session with Mother Nature this afternoon.

Shelburne County Rail Trail

Notes from March 1, 2019

Well we have been told that a low pressure system passing south of Nova Scotia will give us snow tomorrow and at times heavy snow. So we decided to get some trail walking in on Friday under the sun before the storm. Environment Canada calls it a special weather statement. What's wrong in saying there's snow coming so stock up on chips.



We decided to take to the Shelburne County Rail Trail and went to the Brighton Branch that swings past MacKay's Island. We also strayed from the trail to get a glimpse of the Atlantic Ocean off Pleasant Point. This trail runs along the ocean and gives you great views at many points of the ocean and Jordan Bay. We really only walked 1.9 km but it seemed much longer due to the ruts of frozen ice that covered the trail. This trail area has not had the brush cut back and the trail is narrow most of the way. Our quest was just to get an idea of the trails in this area of the province and will come back in the summer and plan a whole day in this area. There are several branches in the Lockeport area and a board-walk to a beach. Many beautiful scenic routes to fill your senses! We were unable to view the surface quality of the trail itself due to thick ice. It was beautiful to see the snow covered forest floor and then at the next turn to be surprised with a full view of the ocean.

Our house is sitting on top of a hill of ice; which makes every step outside a real adventure! Spring is only 18 days away. Hurry Hurry Hard!

The MARC

Notes from October 20, 2019

On October 20th we decided to do the Municipal Activity and Recreation Complex trail in Day-spring. The locals refer to this as the MARC. Look for 33 Leary Fraser Road if you need directions. There are a series of looped and linear trails (all have names) which are maintained and can be accessed year round. Each trail is marked and they vary in difficulty and scenery. It's impossible to get lost here because the trail system (in the confines of a 100 acre chunk of land) is surrounded by roads and private properties. You can stretch the hike out to the full 10 km and go straight to the top and take the several branch-off trails or just pick one or two of the lower loops to do. I think these loops would also be a nice ride for all you mountain-bikers as mountain-biking is allowed here. In our opinion this is one of the best trail networks in the province.



This public park and trail system is owned by the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg and there are no fees to use the trail system. The park is open year round and so you can hike, bike, walk, jog, snowshoe or cross-country ski. If you pay attention you will no doubt see a deer so keep your camera ready. By the way, there is no hunting permitted and during certain times of the year you will no doubt run into a DNR Game Officer just walking through. You are permitted to walk your dogs anywhere in the park as long as they are on a leash and you carry a bag just in case they need to deposit a little gift somewhere during your journey. In the winter there is a pond for skating and two toboggan runs.

On this day we observed users at the BMX/Mountain bike skills park, more than one family picnic taking

place and some families watching wildlife near the ponds. There are three softball fields in the park but they were all empty on this day but very well maintained. We observed two young boys trying to fly a kite but they were not doing too well on that adventure. When we passed the pond area we heard some guitar music and some folks singing and we were impressed on how many people were there and all doing different things. It seemed so peaceful and the perfect family setting. We parked in the parking lot located at {44.3711, -64.4723} or 33 Leary Fraser Road.



We started on the Home Run trail south west of the pond and walked into the forest on a well maintained trail. It starts off as a grass sodded mowed surface and gradually turns to a gravel based surface. By the way there are no ATVs or OHV permitted within the park except those used by park staff for maintenance purposes. As we walked up the hill we travelled north up to Back Alley where you hike along Rhodenizer Brook – a brisk and fresh running flow of water. Both Cheryl and I stopped and rested there just to listen to the water flow. The sun beams came down through the forest trees like spot lights and the best part was that there were no flies or bugs to deal with. After a brief rest and a few photos we walked up past the rapids where there were no sounds except the water flowing. No distant sounds of cars, people or noise of any kind. This is where we are going to return one day with a good book and sit on one of the many benches placed trail-side or just sit on the forest floor. Many of the leaves had already fallen to the forest floor making a carpet of yellow, faded green with orange and red mixed in from the hardwood trees but just enough tall pines to block any bright sun out. We found the most perfect place.



We continued around the loop to finish the Home Run trail and came out of the forest high on a hill next to the Riverview Enhanced Living Center which was built in 1976 by MODL for adults with special needs. The facility has since been sold to the Province of Nova Scotia. We took a few photos looking east at the LaHave River valley. From this location you can look across at Conquerall Bank and out over Dayspring and Upper LaHave. Looking down the river you can see points of Pleasantville as well as West LaHave. After a few photos we re-entered the woods and started down the trail again. We chose to not complete the Cliff Hanger Trail as we will save that for another day. We met a few other walkers on the trail as well as those on mountain bikes. As we came down the trail we checked out a few areas where the mountain

bikers left the walking trails and took to their own biking trails. Too much skill required for this 60+ year old to tackle but I wish these had existed when I was 16 to 26 years old.

It took us a little over two hours to do the walk today and we had a few little rest and photo periods. While we took many photos we are only sharing a few with you in this report. We truly suggest you visit this park and choose your skill level of walk or hike and you are never alone as there are so many users throughout the park. In fact with written permission, you can have a group camp overnight in the park and have access to washroom facilities. We saved this report to the end of the year as this is one of the best hiking locations in the province in our opinion.



