



Discovery Routes

2021-2022 Impact Report

Reconnecting the Trails Community



Discovery Routes
There's no end to our trails



A Message from our Chair

After over 25 years of being involved with Discovery Routes, first as a part-time co-ordinator then as a board member, I thought my turn had come to offer myself up as the Chair a year ago! It has been a whirlwind year for the Board of Directors.

This year we had 6 new trail enthusiasts sign on to the Board of Directors. We put them through some gruelling meetings with the necessity to update our Strategic Plan but the end result provided a clearer direction for the next 5 years. Our priorities focus on sustainability & governance; partnerships & communication; trail systems; marketing & promotion. In the first year we will move forward with two vital requirements: a fundraising strategy & a communication plan. Additionally, we will work toward completing primary trail corridors, supporting local trails and active transportation corridors.

Our website has a new look, one I think you'll find easier to navigate and so enlightening you'll want to get out and explore a new-to-you trail. Be sure to check out the eight cycling Experiences under the Voyageur Cycling Route.

We are ending the year with the hiring of Elderstone, a consulting firm that will assist us in developing a fundraising strategy and the foundation for a sustainable organization.

Thank you to our board members, staff, partner groups, organizations, agencies & municipalities, and of course the trail users who have taken an interest in working with Discovery Routes, allowing us to move forward and improve trail opportunities in the Near North.

Susan Christian, Board Chair

Our Vision

A thriving trails network connecting communities and meeting the diverse needs of trail users in the Near North.

Our Mission

To invest in partnerships for the development and promotion of sustainable multi-use trails and active transportation systems throughout the Near North. Our collaboration and support through the sharing of resources, raising awareness, education and technology connects citizens and visitors while stimulating economic growth, encouraging an active, healthy lifestyle and appreciation for the natural beauty and history of the region.

Land Acknowledgment

The vast network of trails we celebrate exist on the traditional lands and waterways of the Anishinaabe people within the territory protected by the Robinson Huron Treaty of 1850 and Williams Treaties of 1923. By recognizing and honouring the past stewards and original land keepers, we aim to work together where all can connect meaningfully with the rich history of the lands and waters we call home.

Board of Directors 2021-2022

Susan Christian, Chair
 Lance Belanger, Past-Chair
 Paula Loranger, Vice-Chair
 Peter Rooney, Treasurer
 Rod Bilz, Secretary
 Donna Maitland, Member-at-Large
 Alan Korell, Member-at-Large
 Josie Dinsmore, Member-at-Large
 Paul Waqué, Member-at-Large
 Tim Clayton, Member-at-Large
 Ken Prescott, NNTA Rep
 Jessica Jacques, Member-at-Large
 Rich Found, Member-at-Large



1000+

We support a vast and diverse trails network with over 1000km of land and water trails



40+

We support more than 40 communities across the Near North



56+

We work with 56 community trail partners

\$4 M

We have secured over \$4 million for infrastructure and programming since 2000



Connecting Communities and People

Across the Near North, we have a thriving community of volunteers who provide stewardship for a vast and diverse trails network. We work together with our community-based trail partners to foster community involvement to support the sustainable development of local trails and regional connections.

New 5-Year Strategic Plan

We have an ambitious plan that consolidates what we've heard from our Trail Partners and weaves in new ideas from our staff and board. The **2023-2027 Strategic Plan** provides a clear path forward to a well-supported and thriving trails community and gives us direction towards a sustainable trails organization.

Fundraising Support for Laurier Woods

Working in partnership with the **Friends of Laurier Woods**, we assisted in securing over \$20,000 in funding as part of the Walk With Friends fundraising campaign to improve deteriorating boardwalks in the park. The campaign raised more than \$70k!

Land Use for Almaguin Community Trails

We renewed a 5-year land use agreement with the Near North District School Board so the public is able to access the **Almaguin Community Trails**. We also collect donations on behalf of the volunteer stewards of the trails for trail maintenance and improvements.

Former CN rail properties

Working in partnership with the **Near North Trails Association** and **Trans Canada Trail**, we continue to work to secure public access to the former CN rail trails: Beachburg Line and Newmarket Subdivision.



Almaguin Community Trail volunteers

Physical Trail Connections

We continue to act as a regional coordinator to 340km of the **Trans Canada Trail** and are coordinating the development of the **Voyageur Cycling Route** connecting 29 rural and northern communities.

Old Nipissing Ghost Road/ Trans Canada Trail Signs

Staff and volunteers renewed **Trans Canada Trail** wayfinding signs this summer along the Old Nipissing Ghost Road from Magnetawan to Commanda. We are working with trail partners to revitalize stewardship of this important connection in our regional trails network.

Liability Insurance for Trail Partners

We are the Master Policy holder providing \$5 million coverage to Trail Partners named on the policy including **Friends of Laurier Woods**, **Almaguin Community Trails**, **Forgotten Trails Association**, and new trail partner, **Trees for Nipissing**.



Installing TCT signs on the Old Nipissing Ghost Road



Inspiring Trail Use for Health and Well-Being

Spending time in nature makes us feel better. With expansive wilderness at our backdoor and a vast active transportation network of rural and urban roads, there really is no end to our trails. We are providing the resources that will help everyone find the trail that's best for them.

Refreshed website - [DiscoveryRoutes.ca](https://discoveryroutes.ca)

Launched late in 2022, a beautiful new website celebrates and connects trail users to over 1000km of recreational land and water trails. The site now accepts comments from trail users and will evolve to become a tool to connect volunteer trail stewards with trail users.

Discovery Routes Adventure Trails Map

Who doesn't love a paper map to dream and plan the next outdoor adventure? Our popular Adventure Trails Map continues to be a source of trail information for our community and visitors to the region. We are also happy to see that it is being used by local community partners for workplace wellness programs.

"EACH TIME WE PROVIDE THE TRAIL MAPS / INFORMATION TO OUR STAFF IT IS WELL RECEIVED. IT IS PART OF OUR WELLNESS PROGRAM, AND WHAT BETTER THEN EXERCISE AND EXPLORATION OF THE LOCAL AREA."

PHARA

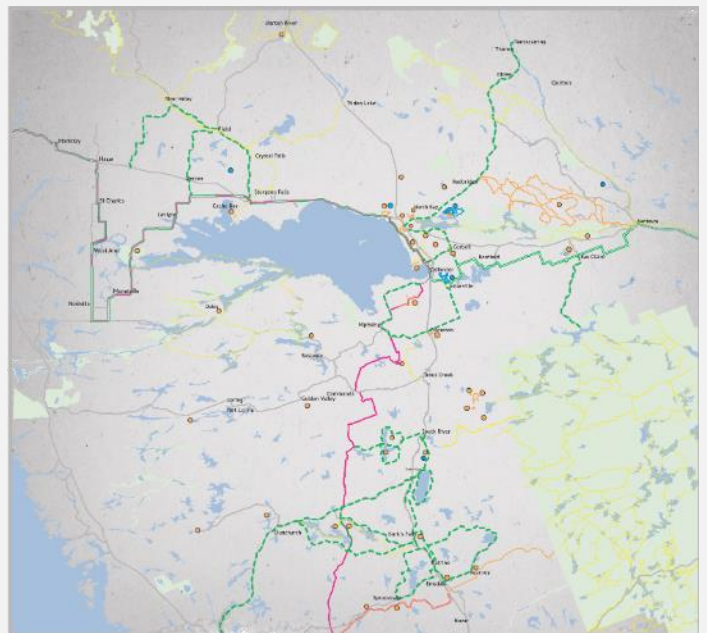
Sharing Stories on Social Media

Social media is another tool to connect to and engage with the trails community. A growing presence on Facebook and Instagram and profiles on Trip Advisor allows us to further our reach, share our stories and yours, and inspire more people to get out and explore.



Storytelling

As a regular contributor to Tourism North Bay blog, we are sharing our connections to the outdoors through our own personal experiences of paddling, hiking and wildlife viewing across the trails network.



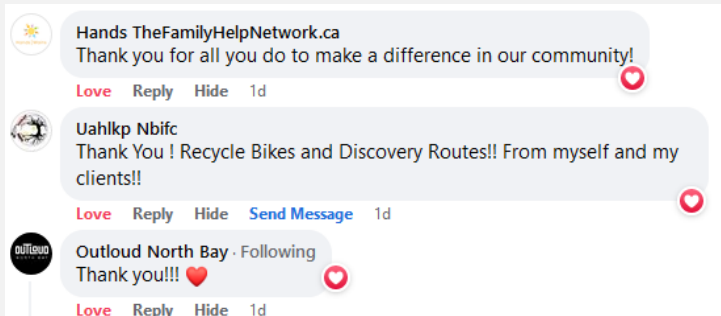


Promoting Safe, Responsible and Equitable Access to Trails

We believe that access to a safe place to walk or ride a bike is a right. Working closely with our municipal and community partners, Discovery Routes helps to inform on the integration of trails and active transportation infrastructure into sustainable community planning working towards equitable access to trails in all our communities across the Near North.

ReCycle Bikes Program

166 bicycles were donated with 120 repaired, tuned up and given to those in need. 352 volunteer hours were logged and 910 kg of waste was diverted from the land fill. We work with the **North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority** and **Laurentian Ski Hill** to run the program and many local **community service organizations** to ensure the bikes got to those in need.



ReCycle Bikes Program volunteer bike mechanics

Community Bicycle Education

We partnered with the **Near North District School Board** to deliver bicycle safety training sessions to Grade 7 & 8 educators in East Parry Sound. These teachers gained the knowledge to teach their students safe cycling skills.

Advocacy for Active Transportation Facilities

We advocate for improved cycling infrastructure for the safety of all road users. As highway rehab projects and municipal roadways are redesigned, Discovery Routes provides comments to ensure cycling infrastructure is included in the design phase. Paved shoulders on **Lake Nosbonsing Road** in East Ferris this year and **Highway 64** in West Nipissing in 2023 are part of the ongoing improvements to the Voyageur Cycling Route.

Advisory Role to Municipalities

With expertise in cycling infrastructure, Discovery Routes has an advisory role on the **North Bay Active Transportation Advisory Committee**. This committee has influenced **new sharrows, bike lanes, bike box** and **share the road signs** on North Bay streets.



ReCycle Bikes workshop at Laurentian Ski Hill Lower Lodge



Supporting the Local Economy

We believe we live in one of the most beautiful places in the world. Sharing that fact is our invitation to explore, discover and deepen connection with nature, to our communities and to others. It gets us moving around our community, attracts visitors from across the region and tourists from farther away.

Trail Experiences Program

Our new “Trail Experiences” celebrate every corner of the region through engaging itineraries that blend culinary, local agriculture, history, nature and culture with a cycling and trail adventure. The self-guided experiences are shared through our improved website, tourism blogs and print and digital advertising including an article in **Cycling Canada Magazine**. We work closely with our tourism partners to achieve the greatest reach including **local municipalities, Tourism North Bay, Almaguin Communities Economic Development, Northeastern Ontario Tourism, Destination Northern Ontario** and **Destination Ontario**. Influencers including Olympic mountain biker **Emily Batty** and travel writer **The Spoked Traveller** have been engaged to experience the cycling itineraries.

Trail Event Support

Cycling events across the region are attracting 100's of cyclists to the region. We are thrilled to support these events including **Ghost Gravel, Ontario Cycling Championships, and Angry Johnny's Mountain Bike Race Series in North Bay and Almaguin**. We support these events through resource sharing and promotion.



Emily Batty meeting members of the North Bay Mountain Bike Association

Bicycle Friendly Business Certification

We work with local businesses to promote cycle tourism in the Near North. 43 bicycle friendly businesses across the region have registered with the **Ontario by Bike Network**.

Signature Trails

We bring national attention to the region by promoting and improving 340km of the **Trans Canada Trail** and the 645km **Voyageur Cycling Route**.

Trail Use Tracking Program

We maintain 6 portable Eco-counters that move throughout the region annually to count cyclists. The data we track helps make the case for continued investments in trails and cycling infrastructure.



2022 Ghost Gravel in South River