

Discovery ROUTES

2025 Impact Report

Rooted in Community



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

\$4.5 M

We have secured over \$4.5 million for infrastructure and programming since 2000



A Message from our Chair

Working together with our Trail Partners, we continue to strengthen local involvement and support sustainable trail development across the region including the Laurentian Escarpment Community Trails. It's all about supporting the trails people love to explore!

A heartfelt thank you to all our Trail Champions - your dedication and hard work make everything we do at Discovery Routes possible.

This year, a new mural by local artist Corbin Elliott brighten our Trail Tool Share shed - a tribute to North Bay's Centennial and a century of volunteer spirit. New trail signs in Corbeil and a renewed Land Use Agreement with the Near North District School Board are helping more people access the trails safely.

We also strengthened how we support trail groups by offering fundraising assistance through our charitable status and providing Adventure Trails maps for partners to sell at events.

We showcased trails at community events and

celebrated another successful Voyageur 200, which raised funds for both Discovery Routes and the North Bay Regional Health Centre Foundation. Kudos to race organizer and fellow board member Jeff Miller!

Our digital outreach continues to grow, connecting new and seasoned trail users alike. Through the ReCycle Bikes Program, 129 bikes and other outdoor gear, found new homes thanks to 405 volunteer hours.

With support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, we launched new stewardship and tool share programs connecting volunteers, sharing resources, and inspiring the next generation of trail stewards.

Looking ahead to 2026, we're excited for new partnerships, an updated Adventure Trails Map, and opportunities linked to the return of the Northlander.

The trail ahead looks bright and we're grateful to share the journey with all of you. See you on the trail!

Paula Loranger, Chair, Discovery Routes

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. Our collaboration and support connect 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 2024-2025

Paula Loranger, Chair
Jeffrey Miller, Vice-Chair
Peter Rooney, Treasurer
Rod Bilz, Member-at-Large
Ken Prescott, NNTA Rep
Lance Belanger, Member-at-Large
Paul Waqué, Member-at-Large
Tim Clayton, Member-at-Large
Shelly Morrison, Member-at-Large

Staff

Jennifer McCourt, Executive Director
Rhea Kaufman, Summer Student
Mike Ward, Trails Project Manager (part-time)

WITH HANDS, HEART AND HARD WORK

Across the Near North, a thriving community of volunteers provides stewardship for a vast and diverse trail network. The integrity of these trails depends on exceptional **TRAIL CHAMPIONS** who embody the true spirit of volunteerism.



The late **WIB SPERBERG** never hesitated to lend a hand repairing snow groomers for the **Bonfield Snowmobile Club**



CHRIS HOLMES would rather build a boardwalk than be on a board at the **Stepping Stones Trails** in Corbeil



HUGUETTE MORIN of the **West Nipissing Ski Club** fondly recalls helping young adventurers strap on skis for memorable days in the snow



TERRI AND DAVID HAIST, moved by the memory of their son, continue to give back through their work with the **Friends of Laurier Woods** to enhance the trails and create opportunities for others to explore nature



BERNIE STOCKERMANS, a lifelong outdoorsman and scout leader, now serves as President of the **Friends of La Vase Portages**, dedicated to preserving an ancient travel route.

BRENT BULL tops the volunteer roster putting in over 200 hours to improve the **Laurentian Escarpment Community Trail** in just 5 short months.



JAMES CONDIE and his loyal companion, Yogi are often puttering on **North Bay's trails** in the early mornings, but grooming the winter trails gives James a "mission in life". **YOGI** picks sticks up off the trail. As James says, "every little bit helps."

These remarkable individuals join the growing list of Trail Champions whose dedication strengthens our trail network and reflects just a glimpse of the countless hours of volunteer work happening across the region. No one works alone - trail stewardship is a team effort.

Read theirs and others' stories at discoveryroutes.ca/Trail_Champions





Connecting Communities and People

Working collaboratively with community-based trail partners, we strengthen local involvement and advance the sustainable development of trails and regional connections.

A Model for Collaboration

We teamed up with the North Bay Mountain Bike Association and community volunteers to advance a long-time vision for the **Laurentian Escarpment Community Trails**. With involvement from the City of North Bay, North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority, private landowners and funding support through the Federal Tourism Growth Program, we have secured new **land use agreements**, hosted over **650 volunteer hours** to improve the trails, created **safe access** and implemented a **trail sign plan** - key steps toward a sustainable, sanctioned, tourism-ready trail network and a testament to the power of collaboration.

Celebrating 100 Years of Trail Volunteers

A new **mural by local artist Corbin Elliot** will decorate the Trail Tool Share shed, celebrating North Bay's Centennial and a century of active living and community connection. The artwork honours generations of volunteers who have built, maintained, and championed local trails and will stand as inspiration for future stewards to carry that legacy forward.

Trailhead Signs in East Ferris

Corbeil will soon have two new **trailhead signs** to pair with new active transportation lanes on MacPherson Drive and connecting to the Voyageur Cycling Route.

Protection for Volunteers

We are the master policy holder providing \$5 million liability coverage to our volunteers and Trail Partners: **Friends of Laurier Woods, Almaguin Community Trails, Forgotten Trails Association, Friends of La Vase Portages**, and **Trees for Nipissing**.

Fundraising Support for Trail Partners

We've formalized how we support trail groups in their **fundraising efforts**, so partners can benefit from Discovery Routes' charitable status when raising money for local trail projects. We also provided **Adventure Trails Maps for partners to sell** at community events, creating an easy, low-cost way to help raise funds for local trail stewardship.





Inspiring Trail Use for Health and Well-Being

Trails support healthy lifestyles by providing an accessible and low-cost option to engage in physical activity in all our four seasons. With expansive wilderness steps from our door and a vast active transportation network of rural and urban roads, there really is no end to our trails.

Sharing our Love of Trails

We love sharing a trail experience with our friends – and how better to spread the love than through community events. **Welcome to North Bay** events in all 4 seasons, **Communities in Bloom Festival** and **North Bay Downtown Old-Fashioned Christmas Walk** were a few of our hits this year.



Discovering Routes

Through **trail maps**, an engaging **social media** presence, and targeted **Google Ads**, more people are discovering trails across the Near North. **Website** visits and online engagement continue to grow as we connect new audiences to the region's trail experiences.

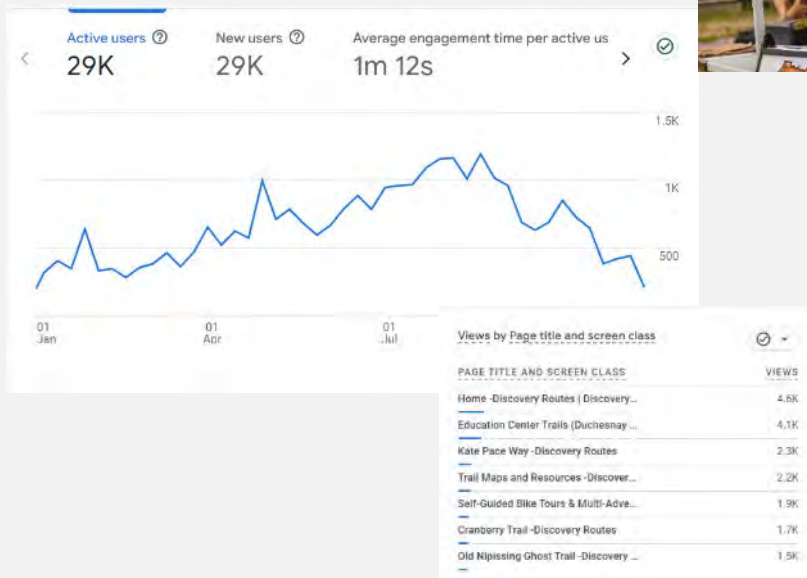
@NearNorthTrailChampions

@DiscoveryRoutes

@VoyageurCyclingRoute

Pedal Power with Heart

The 2025 edition of **The Voyageur 200** brought 97 cyclists on a sweltering August day to grind the best of Northern Ontario's backroads and backcountry trails. Powered by local sponsors and volunteers and our admin support, the event raised **\$9,000 for the cardiac and stroke care** in our community and **\$3,000 to Discovery Routes**. Way to go Jeff Miller, the mastermind behind the event.





Promoting Safe, Responsible and Equitable Access to Trails

Our goal is to create an inclusive and diverse trail user community, where everyone can enjoy the benefits of outdoor recreation and active transportation.

Reducing Barriers to Trail Access

This year, ReCycle Bikes expanded beyond **bicycles** to include **skis, snowshoes, scooters, and other donated gear** - helping more people get outdoors. With hundreds of volunteer hours and strong community partnerships, the program continues to change lives and reduce waste across the region. Behind every donation is a story of community connection and opportunity made possible by our dedicated volunteers and partners.



129 BIKES AND OUTDOOR GEAR DONATED
1,231 bikes since 2015



405 VOLUNTEER HOURS
2,609 hours since 2015



445KG WASTE DIVERTED
3,655 kg since 2018

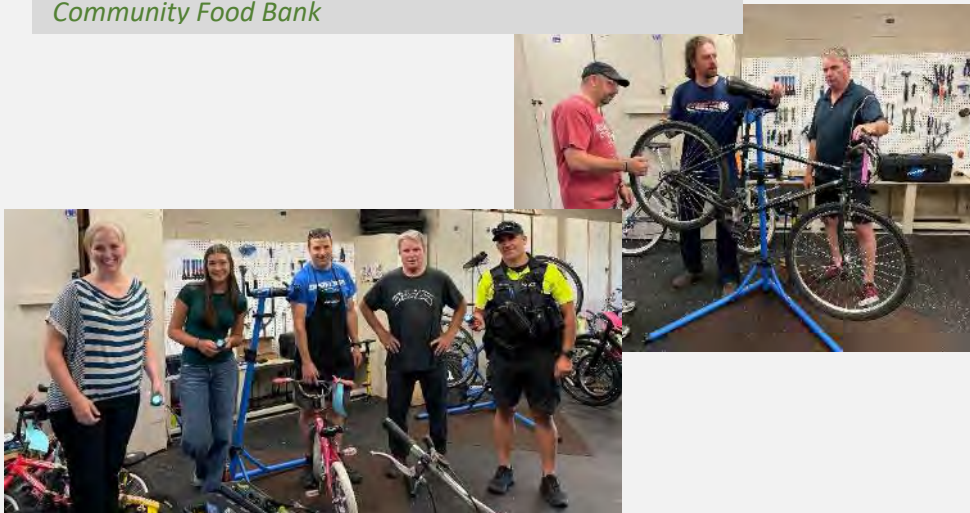
"Two very happy clients received bikes today. Thank you for all the work that you do. It made my day to see how happy these folks were to receive bikes. Thank you!"
Lorie, St. Andrew's United Church Loaves & Fishes Community Food Bank

Strength in Community

With support from an OTF Seed grant, Discovery Routes launched the **Trail Stewardship Program** to connect, train, and recognize volunteers across the region. New digital tools, shared equipment, and collaboration systems are strengthening local capacity and inspiring a new generation of trail stewards leading to more equitable access to well maintained trails in every community.

Sharing Tools and Expertise

Trail groups across our region are powered by volunteers who give their time and energy to keep our trails in great shape, often with very limited resources. A new **Trail Tool Share program** will allow volunteer groups to borrow specialized tools, safety equipment and event supplies without the added expense of purchasing their own. It's a practical way to strengthen collaboration, reduce barriers, and make every volunteer hour count.





Supporting the Local Economy

Trails power the economy. Local spending by residents and visitors who use the trails and participate in trail events spend money on both goods and services related to active recreational activity during their trips, which generates additional economic activity and supports local jobs and businesses.

Partnering with Marketing Experts

An **Endless Gravel** campaign promoted in partnership with Destination Ontario, Northeastern Ontario Tourism and Tourism North Bay features new self-guided gravel routes inspired by the Voyageur Cycling Route and The Voyageur 200, advertising in **Cycling in Ontario** magazine and targeted digital marketing are raising the region's profile and engaging new riders, reaching audiences across Ontario, Quebec and the northern US.

The trails network is also featured in the **Almaguin Highlands Community Guide** and **Tourism North Bay's Discover** magazine.

Trail Events that Put Us on the Map

From World Cup qualifying **Dog Sled Races** at Almaguin Community Trails to mountain bike **Enduro Races** at the Laurentian Escarpment Community Trails and **The Voyageur 200**, our collaboration with local trail groups supports premier outdoor events. These competitions attract visitors, showcase the region, and boost the local economy, putting the area on the map as a destination for friendly outdoor competition.



Ontario's Best Gravel Bike Events in 2025

Whether you're looking to race or just have fun, you'll find a gravel riding event that's perfect for you.



By Melanie Chambers
After many seasons planting "Up North," Melanie Chambers splits her time teaching at Western University in winter and travel writing in summer.

March 6, 2025

Thank You

to everyone who shares our vision of a thriving trails network

Together we will protect and preserve our local trails now and for generations to come



RED TRAIL DONORS

Susan & Karl Christian
In memory of Evelyn
& George Hurford
Comsatec Inc
The Voyageur 200



BLACK TRAIL DONORS

Jeffrey Miller



BLUE TRAIL DONORS

Rod Bilz
Dr. Michael Guy
In memory of
Mike Voyer
In honour of Ward
Smith



GREEN TRAIL DONORS

Len Aitchison
Lance Belanger
Tim Clayton
William Jenkins
Alan Korell
Paula Loranger
Ken Prescott

Jen McCourt
Ken Turner
Paul Waqué
In memory of Grace
Price
Arne Schmidt

In honour of Airport
Euchre Club
Sarah Pihel
Tim Doyle
Eric Chapman
Susan Peter



THANK YOU

to the 129 individuals who donated
their bikes, skis, snowshoes, scooters
and other outdoor gear in 2025.

PROGRAM & TRAIL SPONSORS

Sto & Go North Bay; North Bay Hydro Social Committee; North Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre; PHARA; North Bay District Chamber of Commerce

Discovery Routes is a registered charity #868861998RR0001

Give back
to the trails
you love

Discovery Routes
Laurentian Escarpment Community Trails
ReCycle Bikes
The Voyageur 200
Forgotten Trails Association
Almaguin Community Trails

TO DONATE



discoveryroutes.ca