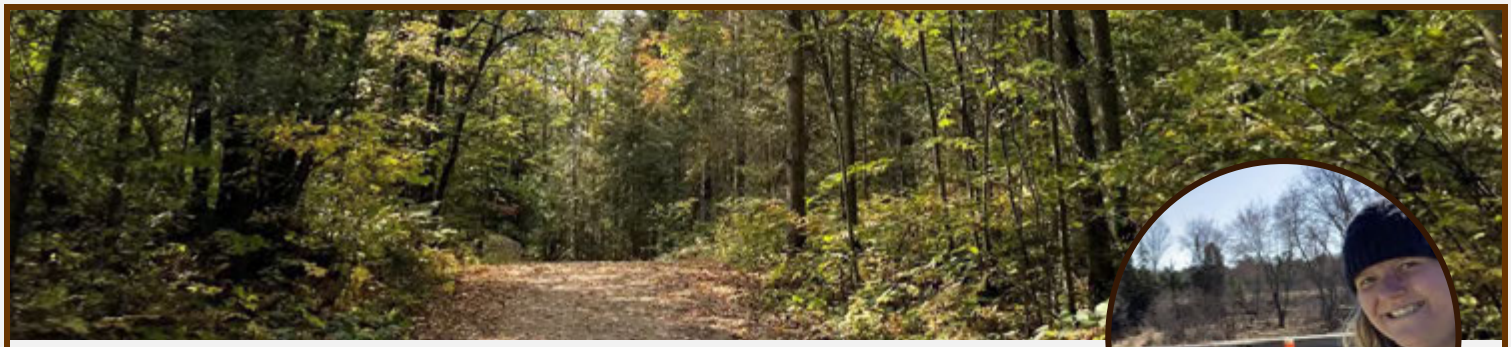

Discovery
ROUTES
2026 Impact Report
1000+
We support a vast and diverse trails network with over 1000km of land and water trails
40+
We support more than 40 communities across the Near North
56+
We work with 56 community trail partners
$4.5 M
We have secured over $4.5 million for infrastructure and programming since 2000



A Message from our Chair

It has been another busy year for Discovery Routes, and I would like to begin by thanking Jennifer McCourt, our Executive Director, along with our sponsors, partners, supporters, volunteers and fellow board members. It is inspiring to see what can be accomplished together!

One of the things I value most about Discovery Routes is the opportunity to help people connect with nature. There is something special about being outdoors and being part of a community that cares for our trails.

This year, we continued to build that foundation. On the Laurentian Escarpment Community Trails, we worked with the North Bay Mountain Bike Association and volunteers to add new signs, advance land use permissions and explore the potential for adaptive mountain biking. In Almaguin, Ontario Trillium Foundation funding supported new grooming equipment and trail improvements, and new signs were put up at the Loring Deer Yard.

We also continued our work with the North Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre, including recommendations for a trail network at the Manidoo Kiitigaan Project and the addition of Nishnaabemwin place names on the Adventure Trails Map. ReCycle Bikes volunteers distributed 129 bikes and participated in a bike maintenance workshop for Indigenous youth from Bear Island.

The North Bay Community Foundation supported our Trail Stewardship Program. While Tourism North Bay and Almaguin Highlands Economic Development, are close partners in promoting our trails. The Voyageur 200 raised another $10,000 for the North Bay Regional Health Centre! We also enjoyed meeting people at many local community events.

Linda McKenzie, Kara Mitchell, Daniel Kaminski and Andrée Morneault are added to the growing list of Trail Champions.

Thank you again to everyone who continues to care for the trails we all enjoy. I look forward to what we can do together next year!

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 2025-2026
Paula Loranger, Chair
Jeffrey Miller, Vice-Chair
Peter Rooney, Treasurer
Tim Clayton, Secretary
Rod Bilz, Member-at-Large
Lance Belanger, Member-at-Large
Paul Waqué, Member-at-Large
Shelly Morrison, Member-at-Large
Tyler Ashurst, Member-at-Large

Staff
Jennifer McCourt, Executive Director

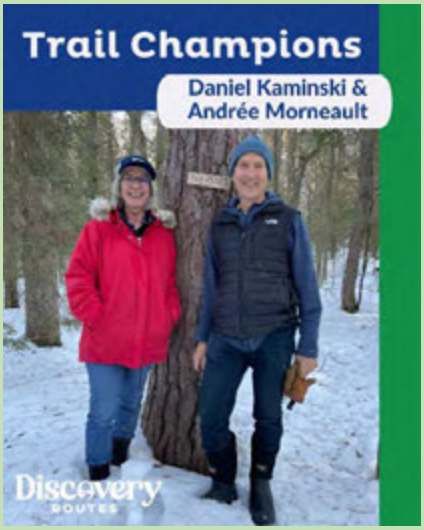
Discovery Routes is a registered charity #868861998

WITH HANDS, HEART AND HARD WORK

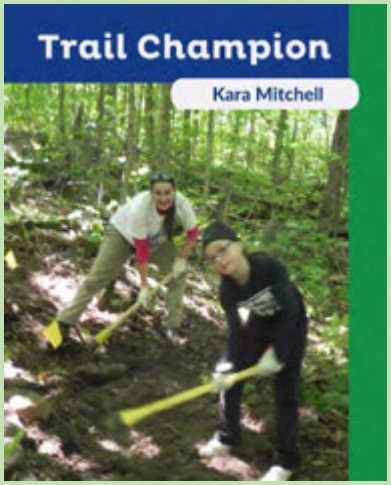
Across the Near North, a thriving community of volunteers provides stewardship for a vast and diverse trail network. The integrity of these trails depends on exceptional TRAIL CHAMPIONS who embody the true spirit of volunteerism.



LINDA MCKENZIE
Forgotten Trails Association
Linda's enthusiasm for trails is contagious. "Getting people out on the trails for the first time and seeing how excited they are - realizing they have this in their own backyard - that's what motivates me."



DANIEL KAMINSKI & ANDRÉE MORNEAULT
Cranberry Snowshoe Trails
Quite simply they maintain the snowshoe trails in Callander "because it is fun!"



KARA MITCHELL
Forgotten Trails Association
"I have strength and enjoy life better connecting to the land and water. There is an incredible group of trail leaders - friendly and inspiring... being part of this community is my way to give back."

TRAIL CHAMPIONS' WALL OF FAME

WIB SPERBERG *in memory*
Bonfield Snowmobile Club

CHRIS HOLMES
Stepping Stones Trails

HUGUETTE MORIN
West Nipissing Ski Club

TERRI & DAVID HAIST
Friends of Laurier Woods

BERNIE STOCKERMANS
Friends of La Vase Portages

BRENT BULL
Laurentian Escarpment Community Trails

JAMES CONDIE & YOGI
North Bay's trails

SCOTT TAYLOR
Wasi Ski Club

RICK JEFFREY
Forgotten Trails

CONNIE HERGOTT
North Bay Mountain Bike Association

STEVE TODOROFF
Almaguin Community Trails

TOM COOK
North Bay Nordic

PAUL DAVIS
ReCycle Bikes Program

GERRY GIESLER
Powassan Trails

Read their stories at
discoveryroutes.ca/Trail_Champions

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.



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.

Another Chapter for Escarpment Trails
We continue to work closely with the **North Bay Mountain Bike Association** and community volunteers to advance the **Laurentian Escarpment Community Trails.** New signs, land use permission and adaptive mountain bike assessment top the list of accomplishments in 2026.

Let it Snow in Almaguin!
We thrilled to have raised $26,100 through an Ontario Trillium Foundation capital grant that will purchase new grooming equipment, signs and mapping and trail improvements for the **Almaguin Community Trails.** No more thrifting parts for the old clunker snow machine!!

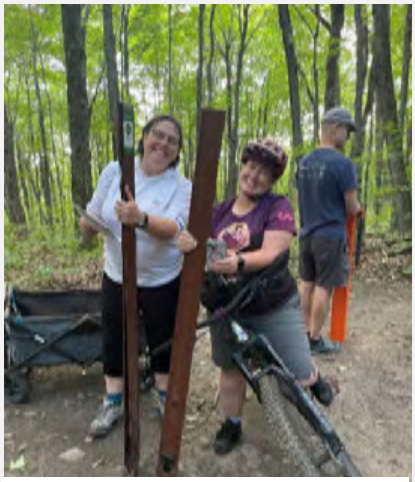
When a Tree Falls in the Forest…
New interpretive **Trail signs** at **Loring Deer Yard** share the natural history of the area. This following a renewed LUP with the Loring Restoule Business Association.

Protection for Volunteers
We are the master policy holder providing $5 million liability coverage to our volunteers and Trail Partners.

Manidoo Kiitigaan - *Creator's Garden*
We worked with the **North Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre** to provide recommendations for the development of a trail network on the property of the **Manidoo Kiitigaan** Project.

A Dual Narrative to Celebrate Past and Present
We are working with the **City of North Bay** and local **indigenous partners** to interpret the new **multi-use trail along the La Vase River** through a dual narrative that both celebrates and honours the deep Indigenous heritage of this significant waterway and reflects its present-day role as a community-connecting corridor.

Sharing our Success with Trail Groups across Canada
In June, we had the privilege of sending a delegate to the **National Trail Summit in Winnipeg** hosted by the Trans Canada Trail.



Hundreds of volunteer hours have gone into the Laurentian Escarpment Community Trails



North Bay staff on trail walk with Sandra Thorkelson, Indigenous Friendship Centre Cultural Resources Coordinator and medical plant expert





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.

Indigenous Language Project

The 2026 edition of the **Adventure Trails Map** has place names in **Nishnaabemwin** with sincere thanks to Elder and Language Keeper, Larry McLeod and Sandra Thorkelson from NBIFC who share their knowledge and help deepen our connection to the land and waterways through the original language. Trans Canada Trail Foundation is supporting the broader initiative to bring **Indigenous language** and **cultural context** into our maps, website and other trail resources.

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**, **Powassan Active Living Fair** and **North Bay Downtown Old-Fashioned Christmas Walk** were a few of our hits this year.



Discovery Routes and Friends of Laurier Woods at the Downtown North Bay Christmas Walk

Pedal Power *with Heart*

Jeff did it again! **The Voyageur 200** raised **$10,000** for the North Bay Regional Health Centre Foundation bringing the total donation since the race inception to **$27,000!!!!**

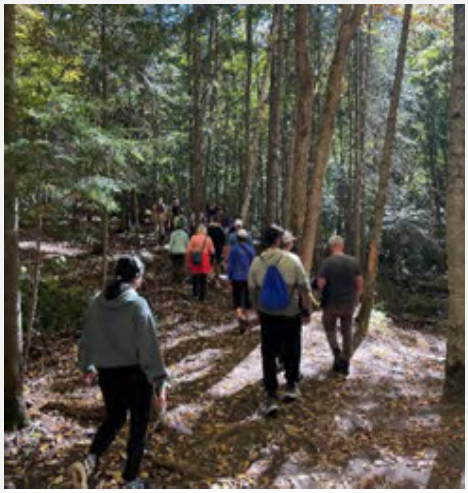
Baffin Community Hike

There was a great turnout for our guided community hike on the Laurentian Escarpment Community Trails celebrating the launch of a new hiking boot by **Canadian Baffin Boots** and Lefebvre's.

Discover*ing* Routes

Through **trail maps**, **social media** and our popular **website** more people are discovering trails across the Near North.

@NearNorthTrailChampions
@DiscoveryRoutes
@VoyageurCyclingRoute



Community hike on Laurentian Escarpment Community Trails attracts ~ 40 hikers of all ages.



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.

More Inclusive Trails

We coordinated an **Adaptive Mountain Bike trail assessment** in consultation with **Handcycling Club of Canada** and North Bay Mountain Bike Association. The assessment identified priority trail improvements to trail that will help make the Laurentian Escarpment Trails network more inclusive welcoming riders of different abilities.



Strength in Community

The **Trail Stewardship Program** volunteer recognition and **Trail Tool Share program** was boosted with support from the North Bay Community Foundation.



"Thank you for another great year with ReCycle Bikes. We appreciate the program so much and it makes such a difference for our youth and families." Big Brothers Big Sisters of North Bay and District Case

Reducing Barriers to Trail Access

Our ReCycle Bikes Program continues to grow with donations of **bicycles** and **trail equipment**. With hundreds of volunteer hours and strong community partnerships, the program continues to change lives across the region.

129 BIKES AND EQUIPMENT DONATED
1360 bikes since 2015

283 VOLUNTEER HOURS
2892 hours since 2015

236KG WASTE DIVERTED
3855KG since 2018

New Hope Bikes Indigenous Youth Program

Our volunteer bike mechanics joined New Hope Bikes in February in the **Teme Augama Anishinabek** community on Bear Island to lend a hand assembling new bicycles for the community. In follow-up, the ReCycle Bikes workshop was a **teaching facility for Indigenous youth**, part of an Indigenous Bike Program aimed at empowering youth through biking and skill-building.

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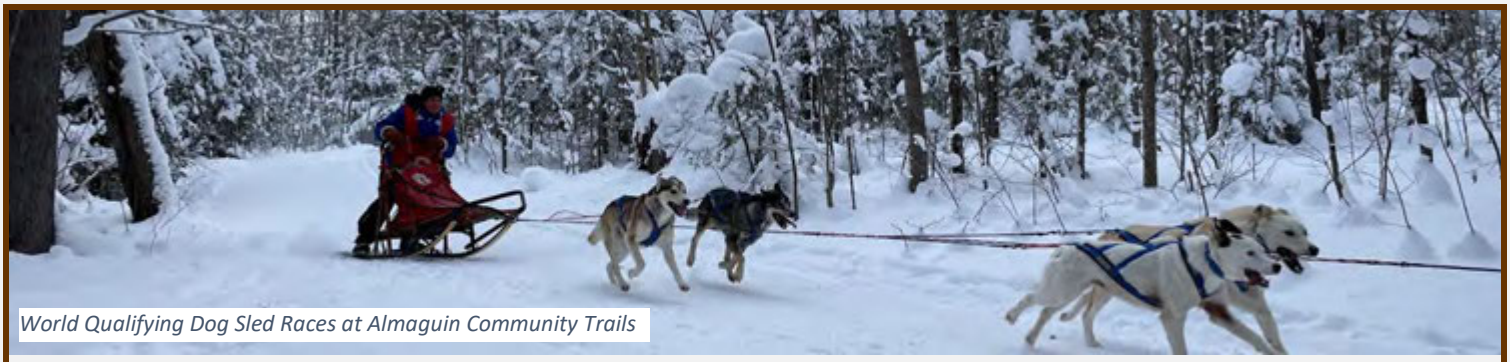
Volunteers, Tim and Lance, teach basic bike mechanics to youth from Bear Island



World Qualifying Dog Sled Races at Almaguin Community Trails

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 recreational activity during their trips, which generates additional economic activity and supports local jobs and businesses.

Partnering with Marketing Experts

Partnerships with Destination Ontario, Northeastern Ontario Tourism, Tourism North Bay and Almaguin Community Economic Development are the key to leveraging marketing. This year we attended the **Toronto Outdoor Adventure Show** and adverted with **Cycling in Ontario** to promote The Voyageur 200 and Mountain Bike Enduro Races, helping to raise the region's profile, engage new riders and reach 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**.



The Voyageur 200 gravel cycling race



Mattawa River Canoe Race

Trail Events that Put Us on the Map

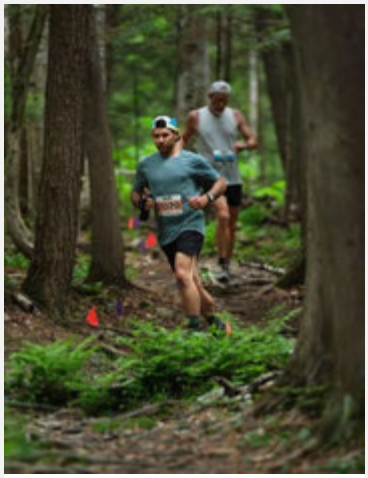
Trail runs, bike races, cross-country ski competitions, canoe races and even Dog Sled Races. Our trails and waterways attract visitors, showcase the region, and boost the local economy. These competitions are putting the area on the map as a destination for friendly **outdoor competition**.



Ride for Jack at Stepping Stones Trails



Enduro Races hosted by North Bay Mountain Bike Association



Lookout Trail Run at Duchesnay Falls

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 Ted & 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 equipment in 2026.

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



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



TO DONATE

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