

The Lakefield Trail Newsletter

We respectfully acknowledge that the Lakefield Trail is on the treaty and traditional territory of the Michi Saagiig Anishinaabeg. We offer our gratitude to the First Peoples for their care for, and teachings about, our earth and our relations. May we honour those teachings.



Reworking the Unsustainable Lily Bed

For 14 years, residents and visitors to Lakefield have enjoyed the beautiful lily garden located north of the Service Ontario building alongside the river. Trail volunteers have spent countless hours each year tending the garden.

While the lilies remained beautiful, the garden eventually became infested with weeds and invasive plants - mainly bindweed and dog-strangling vine. Milkweed and grasses were smothering the lilies. Our small group of volunteers felt that it was a never-ending losing battle, becoming worse every year. We decided to replace the lilies.

Last summer, the garden was completely excavated and new soil was added. Six cherry trees were planted. In order to keep the invasive plants under control and to reduce maintenance, heavy ground cloth and a thick layer of river rock were added as the top layer. Now, we can all look forward to cherry blossoms each spring and, we hope, a reduction in garden maintenance.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Our stewardship committee is moving into its 25th year of maintaining and enhancing the Lakefield Trail. We are proud of our accomplishments and how the Trail has evolved over these years. You, the community members who have supported us in the past, are the reason we have been able to complete our various projects.

Since COVID, our committee has shrunk and, surprisingly, gotten older. It has reached the point that without new members our committee will not be able to provide the minimum

amount of maintenance that we feel is needed on an annual basis. If the committee dissolves, donations and reserved funds will be used for projects on the Trail and other local needs.

“See you on the Trail April 26!”

- Bruce Bellchambers

Evolution of the Water Street Walkway

Before the Trail was built, there was a walkway along the shore on Water Street. Concrete stairs led down the bank to a concrete and stone walkway, just above water level.

When the Trail was planned, authorities wanted the walking portion of the Trail raised to a height that prevented flooding below the dam. The original Trail had two sections of boardwalk.

In 2023, our Trail committee made the difficult decision to remove the shorter section of decaying boardwalk and incorporate it into the main portion of the Trail. Our committee was able to come up with the needed funds. Further help from Accurex and a donation of limestone blocks allowed us to complete this project.

The boardwalks had been originally designed to allow the public better access to the river. The larger section of the boardwalk is quickly coming to the end of its lifespan despite annual maintenance and will need replacing. A decision will have to be made, how much if any of the boardwalk will remain and how much will be turned into a lower maintenance alternative.

Street walkway (below) and original waterfront (right)



Family Paddle Day 2024

In June of last year, the Lakefield Trail Committee sponsored the always popular Family Paddle Day. Many families took advantage of the opportunity to experience the pleasure of being on the water.

Participants had the option to bring their own vessel or use the canoes, kayaks and paddleboards provided by Adventure Outfitters and Lovesick Kayaking. Boaters enjoyed a pleasant paddle on Lake Katchewanooka and the Marsh.

Afterwards, participants cooked hot

dogs and marshmallows over an open bonfire and enjoyed a piece of "canoe cake" baked by Jennie Mackenzie of the Lakefield Pantry.

Experienced and beginner paddlers took advantage of the perfect conditions to enjoy time on the water. It was especially nice to see the number of children who got into a kayak or canoe for the first time.

There were also some wooden boats on display reflecting Lakefield's canoe-building history.



upcoming TRAIL EVENTS

- **Trail Work Day**
Sat, April 26, 2025, 9 am
Meet at the shade shelter, Water St.
- **Earth Day Hike**
Sun, April 27, 2025, 10 am. Meet at the Marshland Centre, Hague Point
- **Native Plant Spring Garden Day**
Sat, May 10, 2025, 9 am. Meet at the Service Ontario building, Water St.
- **Native Plant Garden Summer Work Days.** Wed evenings: June 11, July 16, August 20 and Sept 17. Meet at the Service Ontario building, Water St. at 6 pm
- **Family Paddle Day**
Thu, June 19, 2025, 5:30 pm. Rain date - Monday, June 23, 5:30 pm. Meet at Lakefield Beach, Hague Point
- **Booth at Lakefield Sidewalk Sale**
August 2025, date to be announced
- **PolarFest Night Hike**
Fri, January 31, 2026, 7 pm. Meet at the Marshland Centre

Enjoying Nature on the Spring Hike

In April, the Lakefield Trail Committee offered a guided spring hike led by Tracy Logan around Hague Point to discover the signs of spring and to learn about the plants and animals that are common to this area. There was a good turnout of participants of all ages. Tracy was able to keep everyone engaged as she pointed out the abundance of emerging bushes and wild flowers.

She pointed out numerous bird species that were returning to this area including kingfishers, wood ducks, mergansers and buffleheads. The warmer spring weather also brought out many insects. As we passed Hague Point, Tracy spoke of stratification where top water and bottom water switch places based on temperature differences resulting in an increase in overall water oxygenation.

Tracy discussed the many species of trees, both deciduous and coniferous found in this area. Ash trees showed signs of the emerald ash borer that will eventually cause their disappearance. One tree had been cut down. Tracy asked the children to count the rings and it was determined that the tree was 105 years old.

Thanks Tracy for sharing your knowledge and expertise in an entertaining and informative way.





Trail Social Media and Communication

The Lakefield Trail Stewardship Committee continues to provide Trail users with dynamic ways to connect, share and stay informed throughout the year.

Our Facebook group, Lakefield Trail Community, has seen exciting growth and is just shy of 700 members! This online community allows Trail users to share photos, engage in discussions, and celebrate the beauty of the Trail year-round. Thank you to everyone who bring the Trail to life online by contributing photos!

Additional Trail information is found on the Selwyn Township website (selwyntownship.ca) where this newsletter is posted.

-  facebook.com/lakefieldtrail
facebook.com/groups/lakefieldtrail
-  instagram.com/lakefieldtrail

trail hero BRUCE BELLCHAMBERS

Bruce Bellchambers has played a key role on the Lakefield Trail for twenty-five years.

As part of the celebration of the new millennium, a committee of community members was formed to choose a project to mark this special occasion. Bruce and others advocated for the construction of a trail that would run through the village of Lakefield in order to encourage both local residents and visitors to enjoy the natural beauty of the village.

This project was approved by the committee and the result is the beautiful Lakefield Trail that is now a feature of pride in the community.

Once the decision was made to build a trail, our Reeve at the time, Mary Smith, formed the Lakefield Trail Stewardship Committee to promote use of the Trail and to recruit volunteers to help with its maintenance and enhancement.

With his love of the outdoors, his talent as a woodworker and builder and his enthusiasm for this project, Bruce was a natural choice to be a part of this committee.

Since then, Bruce has devoted an impressive amount of time and effort to the maintenance and enhancement of the Trail. His seemingly endless energy, his determination and his strong leadership have been instrumental in the development of the trail that is now such an integral part of the Lakefield community.

Whenever you walk along the Trail, you will notice many benches, well-tended gardens and a variety of new trees that add so much to the beautification of our community. These enhancements are the result of the initiatives that have been undertaken by the Trail Committee guided by our chairperson Bruce.

Bruce is often seen on his own on the Trail where he is mulching the gardens or planting a tree. He always takes the opportunity to talk to passersby to share his enthusiasm for the Trail. It is fitting that we recognize Bruce as a Trail Hero since it is community members such as Bruce who willingly contribute so much to the enhancement of the village of Lakefield.



Looking to the Future

This year, we will place a bench along the Smith/Bridge St extension in memory of our dedicated committee member, Edna Whitehouse. To recognize Mary Anne Shill's Trail contributions, a cherry tree will be planted along Water St. We're also placing a bench in Cenotaph Park as a tribute to the efforts of the Trail Stewardship Committee.

There are issues with two Lakefield Village signs. On entry to Lakefield from Hwy 28, the Village sign at the boundary needs restoration of missing pieces. The second Lakefield Village sign at Block Road is a rock and concrete structure that

is in a state of decay where it is likely to fall over completely. Neither of these structures lie on the Trail however they reflect poorly on Trail quality that the committee has worked to enhance.

For more information, contact Selwyn Parks and Recreation.



Original Village sign (above) and current sign (right).



SELWYN TRAIL TALK

Everyone loves the trails in Selwyn! Residents and visitors are able to enjoy the trails as a result of the incredible efforts of the many volunteers, staff and contractors in building and maintaining the many kilometres of trails.

The Lakefield Trail Stewardship Committee deserve special mention when thanking groups for all they do on the trails within their village. For more than 20 years, this group of volunteers has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars, hosted fundraising dinners, planned and delivered work days several times each year, purchased/installed trees and benches (67 and counting), provided thousands of hours of volunteering to the trails and gardens and been absolute champions of the Lakefield Trail, the environment and mental and physical health for all trail users.

The many committee members are so greatly appreciated for their tireless efforts. I believe all members would agree that an extra special note of gratitude goes to Bruce Bellchambers who has been passionately engaged since Trail inception. Bruce has been an inspiration for all as to what can happen when you believe in something and then apply every effort you can to make it happen. Thank you so much Bruce! We are glad to finally get Stanley Street paved in 2024 for you.

The Township is continually looking for opportunities to add and expand our trail networks. To that end, the Township completed a Selwyn Trails Master Plan update in November 2024. The Township continues to work with the County to complete phase two of the Gifford Causeway rehabilitation that includes the Multi-Use Path from BEL Rotary Park towards Bridgenorth to be officially opened in spring of 2025.

Future trail plans include the Smith Street extension in Lakefield, the Bridgenorth to Peterborough trail completion, upgrades to many existing trail systems and Lakefield South. The Kawartha Land Trust (KLT) has made several proposals to create connecting trails between Burleigh Falls, Young's Point and Selwyn to connect KLT properties to trails within Selwyn settlement areas. Watch for exciting announcements and developments around these trail initiatives.

When hiking, a winning hiker attitude includes: safety, respect, and relaxation. Leave the trail cleaner than you found it. Carry out all litter. Keep pets leashed.



Trail Maintenance

Each year, we schedule work days to maintain the Trail. In mid-April 2024, 20 community volunteers and committee members braved cold, windy drizzle with occasional snowflakes to mulch many trees, remove weeds from under the benches and trim a number of scrub bushes along the river.

In early May, we dealt with numerous weeds emerging in the native plant gardens. Since the lily bed was overrun with bindweed, dog-strangling vine, milkweed and grasses, we abandoned weeding of it. Instead we removed a massive curtain of dog strangling vine with seed pods on the fence and weeded the south gardens. Later, we pruned back vegetation overgrowing Trail pavement along the river. In July, a small group met to complete branch trimming, mulching, and removal of invasive weeds. In 2024, we replaced all 15 deteriorating interpretive signs along Water St.

From its inception, the committee has focused on trees along the Trail. The popular memorial tree program has resulted in 150 memorial trees that are mulched and weeded each year.

This past year, Trail committee members and volunteers planted 87 new trees along the Trail including four maple trees, eight cherry trees, one plum tree, berry bushes and 75 assorted small species donated by the Village Lions Club. We plan to monitor inoculated ash trees and plant native tree replacements as they die over time.

All planting and maintenance is completed by Trail committee members and volunteers. You can keep up to date on upcoming maintenance on our social media.

KAWARTHA LAND TRUST

The Township is continually looking for opportunities to add to and expand our trail networks.



The Kawartha Land Trust (KLT) has made several proposals to create connecting trails between Burleigh Falls, Young's Point and Selwyn. Primarily, these trails would connect the KLT properties and trails within settlement areas in Selwyn.

Watch for exciting announcements and developments around these trail initiatives.



Township of Selwyn,
Parks and Recreation Department
705-292-9507 ext 243
Recreation@selwintownship.ca

Trail information available at:
www.lakefieldtrail.ca

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