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Do you have news of interest to Island Trails' members and trail enthusiasts? Send it to us and we'll try to include it in the next issue of you Island Trails Newsletter. Remember that being a member is all about participation. [info@islandtrails.ca](mailto:info@islandtrails.ca)

### Senior's College Hiking

Once again this year Seniors College hiking course was in high demand. There were 50 registered for the course with over 30 participants in each of the hikes. Facilitated by Ruth Delong, over the 8 week period, the group hiked Fort Amherst, Robinson's Island, Bonshaw, Confederation Trail, Strathgartney, Breadalbane, Winter River, and Brookvale. Ruth's ongoing interpretative sessions provided an intriguing level of interest throughout the hikes.

To provide newcomers to the group with information regarding the choice of gear, Sporting Intentions hosted an evening session for all participants.

After our final hike at Brookvale the class enjoyed a wonderful hot lunch at the Nordic Centre in a pristine natural setting.

Special thanks to Ruth for her long term dedication to leading this group as well as to Georgie Clow, Marylou Turner, Mary Gorman, and Barb Trainor who assisted.



Senior's College class posed in front of colorful hardwoods at Brookvale.

*Submitted by Barb Trainor*

#### Interested in Hiking?

Two groups hike year-round, rain or shine. To join the fun, just show up at the Indigo parking by 8:30 a.m. to carpool to the chosen destination. There is no charge or registration.

#### Wednesday Hikes:

Hikes are approximately 1.5 - 2 hours at a good pace primarily on woodland trails. Socialized dogs are welcome. For more information email Susan Norton at [snorton@eastlink.ca](mailto:snorton@eastlink.ca).

#### Saturday Hikes

Hikes are approximately 2 hours. Dogs are welcome and must be on a leash and under the control of the owner at all times. For further information, contact [trailsforall@gmail.com](mailto:trailsforall@gmail.com).

#### Tip-to-Tip Adventure on the Confederation Trail

Anna Karpinski, writer and photographer, rode the Confederation Trail this past year. The link below shows an enticing and interesting perspective of the trail. Anna plans on riding across Newfoundland next year and then will tackle one province at a time with the goal of riding the entire Trans Canada Trail.

Please visit

<http://travelswithadonkey.com/trans-canada-trail-one-province-and-territory-at-a-time/>.

**Wondering about  
Christmas gifts for your  
hiker?**



Island Trails relies heavily on donations and memberships to fund projects and activities to keep the trails available for users year round. If you would like to purchase a membership or give a gift at Christmas, please visit [islandtrail.ca](http://islandtrail.ca) to make a donation or email [info@islandtrails.ca](mailto:info@islandtrails.ca).



*Photo credit: Kathryn Murray*  
New stairs installed on the Bonshaw Hills trail in November, 2015!



*Photo credit: Kathryn Murray*  
An inviting view of the trail in Bonshaw.

## Bonshaw Hills Trails

More than a year ago, the federal government announced plans to spend \$10 million on trail development across Canada. The funding was to be provided through the federal infrastructure program and eligible projects would require matching funds from provincial governments or other funding partners. To be eligible, projects needed to be completed by December 31, 2015.

Island Trails decided to submit an application for funding. The project we put forward was for trail development in the Bonshaw Hills area, just west of Charlottetown. This seemed like a natural fit for federal funding as the government of PEI had already acquired several large parcels of land in the area as a result of the highway realignment near Bonshaw. Moreover, Island Trails and other members of the Bonshaw Hills Public Lands Committee (BHPLC) had just submitted a land management plan to the PEI government recommending conservation of the public lands in Bonshaw and the creation of a park complete with hiking and biking trails. We felt the PEI government would welcome federal funding for the construction of trails and other infrastructure in the area and would agree to match the federal contribution.

Island Trails submitted a proposal to the National Trails Coalition, the organization charged with coordinating applications from all parts of Canada. Ultimately, 240 projects were approved for funding, including our project. The funding was divided between motorized and non-motorized sectors, with one third going to snowmobiling, one third to ATVs, and one third going to hiking/cycling. We received a commitment of \$53,333.33, the total amount allocated to the non-motorized sector in PEI.

Our original application had called for a federal commitment of \$150,000 with matching funds of \$150,000 from the government of PEI. When we realized the federal share would only be \$53,333.33, we were forced to scale back the Island Trails part of the project. We focused on the most immediate priority, which was replacement of a pedestrian bridge across the west river which had been washed out in a spring flood and construction of a pedway under the Trans Canada Highway (TCH) to link existing trails on the south side of the TCH to new trails on the north side of the TCH.

The government of PEI tendered for construction of the bridge and pedway and construction started in late fall last year. The bridge and pedway were completed by late spring. Island Trails has been tracking progress on the bridge and pedway and submitting invoices to the NTC for reimbursement of eligible expenses. We are currently awaiting final payment pending audit and final project verification. The total project cost exceeded \$200,000, with the provincial share being in excess of \$150,000.



The new bridge connecting the trail to the Green Road.

In addition to the bridge and the pedway, the government of PEI has continued to fund construction of trails initially envisioned as part of the overall management plan recommended by the BHPLC. The trail design and development work has been facilitated through collaboration with Cycling PEI, with one of their members being directly involved in the trail construction activities.

The project is an excellent example of collaboration between community leaders, watershed groups, environmental organizations, recreational groups, volunteers and governments at all levels. Approximately 10 kilometers of new trail have been completed, including stream crossings and stairs to access the steepest parts of the trail. A new bridge across the west river has been built and a pedway under the TCH has been completed, facilitating access to the new trails. The government of PEI has erected new temporary signs on the trails and permanent signs are being designed to be posted in the spring of 2016. Best of all, both parking lots are full every weekend as hikers and bikers come out to Bonshaw to enjoy a few hours on these excellent new trails. 'See you out there! *Submitted by Bryson Guptill*

## 8 Tips for Safe Hiking

- Let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return.
- Carry a light.
- Stay on marked trails.
- Carry a whistle.
- Assign a 'sweep' if hiking in a large group.
- Respect mother nature and avoid stormy days.
- Stay hydrated.
- Stay visible.



Can't wait to snowshoe again!



## Island Trails

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## Confederation Trail

The Confederation Trail, P.E.I.'s section of the Trans Canada Trail, has come a long way since development began in 1993. CN abandoned the railway line in 1989 and the rail corridor quickly began to deteriorate as a result of overgrowth and erosion. With the dedication of many people and the commitment of the provincial government, we now have 435 kilometres of multi-use trail across the Island. It is a gem and the envy of other provinces. Locals use it daily, tourists use it year round and many want to come to experience what we have accomplished in a relatively short time. There is a peacefulness about the Confederation Trail that is hard to find in other places— the beauty of the leaves turning colour in the fall on the hardwood trees, the wildflowers, the smell of blueberries, the taste of blackberries... These are all part of a unique Confederation Trail experience. Almost every kilometre has something special to offer if you are tuned-in to what is around you. Take time to enjoy it all.

There are a number of ongoing Trail initiatives aimed at improving Trail user experience:

22 Trail Volunteers act as the eyes and ears of the Trail and are willing to assist users if needed. Their help is very much appreciated and I would like to thank all of them for doing a stellar job in reporting on the Trail. If you would like to become a Trail Volunteer please contact me.

A Way Finding program has been developed over the past two years and will be completed in the spring of 2016. The information on these signs will help users find places to eat, stay, access washroom facilities, etc. Kiosks have been installed at a number of locations and will be filled with appropriate town/area maps along with community information regarding places to explore.

Certificates of achievement are available for those cycling or hiking the Trail (Tip to Tip or on a particular section). These certificates can be picked up at most Visitor Information Centres or Destination Centres.

Next year a Trail survey will be conducted to mark 'viewsapes'. In some areas trees have blocked traditional view points worth reinstating. We won't be cutting a lot—just in key locations so that the view is available and the breeze can blow through.

I'd also like to thank Doug Murray who has been working hard on the Interpretive Panels. The new panels for the Murray Harbour Branch will be installed next summer. We are very fortunate to have Doug working on these. The information is fantastic and adds a wonderful historical element to the Trail 'experience'.



Photo Credit: Kathryn Murray

The Confederation Trail works well thanks to strong collaboration between two provincial departments. Building and maintenance of the Trail is coordinated by the Department of Transportation, Infrastructure and Energy under the very sound guidance of Trail Coordinator Leo Gill and his 3 Trail Supervisors - Wayne MacPhee in the west, Carol MacWilliams central, and Kevin Roach in the east. I would like to thank them and all the rest of the crews for their work. The management and promotion of the Trail is looked after by the Parks Division who is part of the Department of Economic Development and Tourism. By working together, the Confederation Trail is becoming a world class trail destination.

If you have suggestions for improvements on the Confederation Trail please contact me [redelong@gov.pe.ca](mailto:redelong@gov.pe.ca) or 902-394-1645.

Ruth DeLong  
Trails Community Relations Coordinator

Interested in Volunteering? Island Trails is a non-profit corporation which is run by a group of active volunteers. If you would like to help out, let us know by emailing [info@islandtrails.ca](mailto:info@islandtrails.ca).

## Covehead Bridge Closure for Repairs

The purpose of this project is to rehabilitate the aging Covehead Bridge which connects PEI National Park between Brackley and Dalvay. The bridge is a multi-span concrete structure which spans an active fishing and recreational harbour. Secondary updates to be addressed as part of the rehabilitation are the addition of a sidewalk on the south side that provides safer use for pedestrians and cyclists using the Gulf Shore Way multi-use trail.

To facilitate this work, the bridge will be closed to all vehicle and pedestrian traffic between October 2015 and April 2016 and the Gulf Shore Parkway and Gulf Shore Way multi-use trail will also be closed between Shaws Beach and the Covehead Bridge. There will be a [detour](#) in place to reroute vehicle traffic during this time.

## Renovations to Public-Use Facilities – Greenwich

Greenwich will be undertaking a project this fall that will see upgrades to visitor facilities. The Greenwich Beach boardwalk and the floating boardwalk that crosses Bowley Pond, as part of the Greenwich Dunes Trail, will be replaced. As a result, Greenwich will close for the season as early as late September and will re-open for visitors in the summer of 2016.

## Signage



The signage on the woodland trails maintained by Island Trails is constantly being updated. The extreme snowfall amounts of the last two winters had made it difficult to visibly navigate some of the trails. New signs as demonstrated in the attached photos have higher visibility to guide hikers safely through the trails. The signs will be placed high enough to be visible during months of excessive snowfall.

The orange directional arrows indicate a change in direction in the trail. They are also used at junctions to make hikers aware of alternate routes.



The orange squares and the signs with the hiker symbol indicate that you are on the trail and are to continue in the direction you are presently headed.

These orange squares are often in place to reassure hikers that they are still on the trail or to assist hikers in finding the trail again if they have drifted away from the path. In order to protect surrounding plant and wildlife, hikers are encouraged to remain on the trail.

*Submitted by Susan Norton*

## Friend of the Trails



Hall Mills, owner of The Dunk, recently passed away. His contribution to the PEI and nationwide music community was widely recognized.

But Hal also made a significant contribution to his community of Breadalbane and to Island Trails. Breadalbane had earlier developed a hiking trail which was used by Trails4All and local residents, when Island Trails began its Destination Trails project.

Hal cooperated with the coordinating committee, providing his knowledge of the site topography, increased access to his own land, encouraged his neighbors to do the same, and garnered general community support for a major upgrade to their trail. The result as all hikers agree is a jewel in the Destination Trails crown. Thanks, Hal.

*Submitted by Tom Connor*

*From all of us at Island Trails*

*May your season be filled with love, joy, peace and wonder.*

