

Toronto Bruce Trail Club - Factsheet and early History

1959 Ray Lowes conceived the idea of a continuous hiking trail from Queenston to Tobermory along the Niagara Escarpment.

1960 Ray Lowes presented the idea of this 430 mile footpath to the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, proposing it as a centennial project to be completed by 1969. The Bruce Trail Committee was formed, and planning began with a \$12,300 grant from the Atkinson Foundation.

1962 Phil Gosling took a year off from his job to organize people and the clubs to build the Bruce Trail

1962 June 28 Phil Gosling organized a meeting of potential Toronto area Bruce Trailers. Many of these people were members of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists and the Toronto Hiking and Conservation Club. They formed the MidOntario Bruce Trail Association. Their major goal was the construction of a hiking trail from Rattlesnake Point to Mono Centre. Jim Allan, Doug Brown, Jim Byers, Olive Byers, Doug Campbell, Deirdre Clark, Pat Hardy, Ian Lamont-Smith, (chairman), and Al Shaw formed the nucleus of this group and played integral roles in the development of the Toronto Club.

1962 June 22 The Toronto section was officially opened. This was the first section of the Bruce Trail to be completed.

1963 The Toronto section was reduced in length, and the section from Terra Cotta to Mono Centre was assigned to the newly organized Caledon Hills Club.

1963 September 24 Our Club name was changed to the Toronto Bruce Trail Club.

1964 January The first edition of Footnotes was published. It included a short history of the BTA and an announcement of the club's first organized winter hike. A limited hiking program developed

1967 March The first BTA exhibit at the National Sportsman's Show. Toronto members built and display and staffed the booth.

1967 April 23 Fred Turner organized the first Toronto End-to-End. Weather was overcast with a raw wind.

1967 June 10 Official opening of the entire Bruce Trail

1968 Fred Turner succeeded Doug Stewart as Hiking Director. Fred formed a committee to organize regular hikes. The result was a varied program which later included skiing and snowshoe hikes.

1968 Fred Turner organized the first bus hike to Dundas Valley (some by car) with almost 200 people

1969 November 8 The Club held a landowners night and 14 of the 22 landowners attended.

1970 The Niagara Escarpment Preservation was formed to help ensure the future of the Trail. One effective way to preserve the trail was to acquire land, establish right-of-way for the Trail and then pass the land on to Conservation Authorities. In the Toronto section, funds were donated to acquire the Hilton Falls and Silver Creek conservation areas.

1973 The Niagara Escarpment Commission was established by the Ontario government to develop a master plan which would secure this natural resource for future generations and guarantee a route for the Bruce Trail through a natural setting.

1973 April Toronto Club backpacking weekends in the Peninsula were planned, and Ken Young organized a sight-seeing flight over the Escarpment.

1974 Fred Turner and Bill Thompson organized the first major trip away from the Bruce Trail - - hiking in the White mountains of New Hampshire.

1974 January Ken Young became the honorary member of the Club. Ken oversaw most of the club's activities from 1968-1973 during the transition period from trail building to hiking. He held the positions of Secretary and Treasurer of the Club and VP of the BTA. He was editor of Footnotes and brought out the 1st edition of the guidebook with coloured maps. A memorial overlooking the Beaver Valley was erected in memory of this special man.

- Ruth Pincoe