

# Trail Captains Toronto section info

May 2026

## ORGANIZATIONAL THINGS:

### Finding help :

We consider this group as a family. Hopefully, at the end of these sessions both on-line and in person, we will be an even more cohesive group ! We will share the list of other trail captains in your zone, who have consented to share info, so that we can all reach out to each other if things seem too large. You can also reach out to me or your Zone captains if a big job is needed to set up a work party. If you know that you will be away from May to October for more than a month, please let us know so that we can help on your section when you are gone.

### Zone areas :

The Trail Captains have become a large group of volunteers, and when all the reports are sent in it's too much to keep on top of for one person. You can still contact us at [tbtc.trailmaintenance@gmail.com](mailto:tbtc.trailmaintenance@gmail.com)

The trail sections have been split into three 'zones' (Approximate) Coordinator	Current Zone
South -from Hwy 401 to 4 <sup>th</sup> Line Halton Hills	Bradley Stevens
Central- from 4 <sup>th</sup> Line Halton Hills to 8th Line Halton Hills	Ian Grindall
North- from 8th Line Halton Hills to Creditview Rd	Mark Pottruff

### Important calendar dates

Trail Status Reports due by June 1, September 1, and November 1 each year.

There is a run on our section on the Main Trail held approximately the second Saturday in July and the Toronto club "end to end" hike is the approximately the second weekend each September.

## TRAIL WORK THINGS:

### Blazes:

We are asking all TC's to do a focused walk of their section in both directions in the spring, with a pot of white or blue paint (available in the locker) to spruce up existing blazes and using scrapers to trim down oversize blazes to the 2" x 6" standard. Many blazed trees fall during the winter leaving gaps large enough to confuse hikers. Hikers should be able to see the next blaze from the one they are passing.

Blaze in one direction at a time as the best "sight lines" often do not correspond to the same tree in both walking directions. Try to stay on one side of the trail in each direction but if there is no good option, use the other side. Blazes should be at approx. 5 feet height.

Painting with two people is often better than one. With 2 people you can switch off the actual painting to :

-trim back brush from a wedge before the tree with the blaze, to clear a sight line for the blaze & scrape loose bark/moss or loose paint from an old blaze and redo/mark a new outline with a marker

Please look for and correct:

Under-blazed sections or missing blazes (blazed trees have fallen)

Incorrect blazes (3-way blazes, blaze over a diamond instead of under, etc.)

Blazes too high to see or completely obscured in the summer (trail needs trimming)

Related to the blazes are diamonds that are being deformed or are faded and need to be replaced. Please take a Robertson screwdriver (square tip, Red) with you to back out screws. If the diamond is nailed a hammer or crowbar may be needed to remove the old diamond. Please use Robertson screws to replace any diamonds - not nails.

One of the 'Loose on the Bruce' videos (#5) on the BTC website is a good refresher on how to paint blazes. <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL94696A899CA0A928>

Paint blaze kit – put together one easy to carry including a basket or larger container with a handle, paint pot and brush (1” is best) , a black marker and blaze template, plastic bag for brush once you are done ( so it won't dry out & can be cleaned and reused), thin gloves if you don't want painted fingers and wipes for everything that gets painted beside trees- most everything needed to put together a blaze kit is available in the storage unit.

### **Expenses :**

The club will reimburse physical materials used if you check with us first. Please keep your receipts and mail to us or better still take a photo of them and text them to us so that we can pass them onto the Treasurer of the club. Expenses are generally processed toward the end of each month and paid by an e-transfer several weeks later.

### **Equipment :**

We recommend you consider the following personal items when working- Sunscreen, Insect spray, Work gloves, Water proof shoes, long shirts and pants to protect you from plants and insects, tucking your pants into your socks, a wide brimmed hat, and drinks and snacks. Consider bringing a small garbage bag with you for found trash on the trail. Larger bags are available in the locker room.

We will supply a Bruce Trail yellow vest, a copy of the basic Trail Captain guidebook, loppers, and a hand saw. From time to time, we also supply other items which we will let you know are available in the locker room. Take loppers or hand clippers and a bow saw or folding saw for branches that are too much for loppers. A Robertson No. 2 (red) screwdriver is very handy to loosen screws from the signs in our trees. We should do this once a year to minimize damage to the tree.

### **Graffiti :**

Graffiti should be removed as soon as possible. We stock “Tremclad” graffiti remover in our locker in Georgetown. It works well on wooden surfaces. For metal or stone surfaces, we

recommend a wire brush and rust-coloured or black spray paint to cover over the graffiti which is also found in the locker.

### **Locker Room :**

We review the storage unit on River Rd. once yearly ( usually at the end of the fall ) to budget and order supplies for next year as well as clean and relabel things in the unit . If you think we need something or having troubles finding something, let us know. Please return tools you are not using in the fall. Let us know at [tbtc.trailmaintenance@gmail.com](mailto:tbtc.trailmaintenance@gmail.com) , if you use the last paint in the can, or take the last paint brush, etc. for items we have a larger supply of. Please clean trimmers and brushes and retread trimmers, etc. before you return them. . Please also consider reloading items such as string in the trimmer for the next person. If you have broken or lost equipment , please let us know.

We do have a second storage unit at Scotsdale Farm which holds lumber and supplies not usually used by trail captains. There is a list of contents on the TBTC website – Look for “ the Trail” at the top of the page then scroll to “Trail Maintenance” and choose that page and scroll to the bottom of the page to click on and review the list. The contents are also posted on the inner portion of entry doors on both sites.

### **How to make a Reservation for locker room tools:**

We all share string trimmers, saws, post pounders and other “one or few of a kind” things. There is a list of items stored in each locker posted on the TBTC website under Trail Maintenance and in each locker.

Power equipment such as drill/drivers, brush saws, string trimmers – both long hand held and wheeled and all associated batteries can be signed out by contacting us at [tbtc.trailmaintenance@gmail.com](mailto:tbtc.trailmaintenance@gmail.com) . Please allow 2-3 days for a reply. Batteries cannot be recharged in our locker room and instructions for returning batteries are posted on the locker room wall. Currently, there are two volunteers in Georgetown to do our recharging- Dave Paape ( [dave.pappe@gmail.com](mailto:dave.pappe@gmail.com) /24 Emslie St./4165790823 and Laurent Thibault ( [lthibault@cogeco.ca](mailto:lthibault@cogeco.ca) /24 Cindebarke Terrace / 6472037795 ). Batteries should be left with them by prior arrangement . They can be often left on Laurent’s front porch and Dave’s back porch. They will charge the batteries and return them to the locker the next day.

### **Lost and Found items in your section:**

There is an online Facebook (Meta) page called “Bruce Trail Hiking Lost and Found” where items you find can be posted . We suggest taking a picture with the item and a location of where it was found. You can also leave items at roadside trail heads.

### **Safety issues:**

- Safety in our Workspace- Preventing problems-

Environmental – 1. Water - Please remember to drink plenty of water , especially on hot days. You should consider that if you are passing urine every 4-6 hours that’s enough. If you are feeling thirst you are already dehydrated.

1. Wind- If it is windy out there ( > 30-40 kms./hr gusts) consider doing your work and hiking some other day , as the wind increase the risk that a tree will come down on you !!

2. Sun- Consider wearing a wide brimmed hat and long acting sunscreen with at least an SPF of 30 to prevent sun damage.

4. Equipment – Be sure you are familiar with using all of our equipment before you set out on your own. If you are not sure, please call us and/or read the manuals found in the locker first ! If you use the **hand held small battery operated pruning chainsaw**, you should also use a pair of safety glasses and chainsaw proof gloves which are also found with the saws in the locker. There is a first aid kit in the locker which can be used if needed on your work. Please use the equipment safely and familiarize yourself with the manuals which are kept in our locker.

5. Plant safety info- poison ivy- Leaves of 3, “let them be”. Consider using gloves to clean the string or hand held trimmers. Wear long pants. If you do notice streaky blisters on your skin , go early as treatment is often easier. <https://www.aad.org/public/everyday-care/itchy-skin/poison-ivy/who-gets-contagious> Other plants you may occasionally see include giant hogweed and poison oak.

6. Insects info- Ticks- Consider wearing long light coloured pants, even in hot weather. Tuck the end of your pants into your socks for added protection. Make a habit of checking your skin after you work, within a few hours. Best done with a shower. Get some help to check if you can. If you do find something suspicious, try to remove it with tweezers not your fingers. If you do remove it within 24-36 hours you are safe. If the body breaks off, and the mouth parts stay in your skin, you are also ok, as it's the saliva stored in its body that the tick secretes back into you when it drops off that carries the bacteria that causes Lyme disease. **If you are not sure what type of tick it is or found the tick too late**, you can consider going to a pharmacy or a doctor for a prescription of antibiotic to prevent the disease. <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/About/News/2022/Tick-Season#:~:text=Ticks%20in%20Ontario&text=It%20is%20possible%2C%20however%2C%20to,the%20temperature%20is%20above%20freezing.>

7. Mosquitoes and West Nile Virus- West Nile Virus first appeared in North America 25-30 years ago. It can occur anytime mosquitoes are out but is more prevalent as the summer progresses as the many carrier are birds which have to be stung by an infected mosquito then transmit it to another mosquito which bite them and which may then bite us. 80 % of people who contact the virus will have NO symptoms. About 19 % will have fever, headache, widespread muscle aches, a rash, and vomiting and diarrhea starting 2-14 days after the bite. Most commonly 2-6 days later. About 1 % of people, 2-6 more times commonly people over 60 will progress to have a headache, fever, a stiff neck and are bothered by bright lights. Those that do contact the virus have long lasting immunity to it. If you are concerned , seek medical advice. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/west-nile-virus/surveillance-west-nile-virus/west-nile-virus-weekly-surveillance-monitoring.html>

### **Structures:**

**Describing structures on our trail** -We have provided some names for the basic “anatomy” of our structures that you can use when describing them back to us.

1. Stile- Two sets of steps meeting in the middle with a platform on top, usually found over a juncture with a fence or other barrier. They are anchored into the ground with metal posts usually.

2. Boardwalk – A low lying structure , usually found over a wet area. No handrails , may have toe-rails on the sides.
3. Bridges – A higher structure often more than 60 cms. ( 2 feet) off the ground. Often has handrails , may have steps at the ends. Handrails are usually supported by cut pieces of wood attached to longer pieces of decking which protrude from the sides.
4. Side logs- A long wooden log ,often found where the trail crosses a slope at the junction of the trail and the down slope side of the trail. They should be level with the ground and are held in place by 2 foot metal pieces pounded into the ground called angle irons, or with rebar and brackets which are then attached to the logs by screws or nails.
5. Steps- Often made by 4 by 4 in. or 6 by 6 in. pieces of pressure treated lumber or larger logs. Should be level and held in place by 2-3 angle irons or rebar with brackets & screws. Each step up should be 6- 8 inches.

#### **“Anatomy” of the above structures :**

- Sleepers – The piece of the above structures lying on the ground supporting the rest of the structure. May be made out of flat rocks, local cut wood such as cedar, or processed wood such as 4 by 4 or 6 by 6 inch pieces.

- Stringers – The long pieces of wood often running the length of the structure which rest on the sleepers and where the deck boards are placed.

- Deck ( or Foot) Board- The pieces of wood on which we directly walk. They rest on the sleepers and stringers. Attached by nails or screws to the stringers. They often have toe railing placed on either end of the board to help people from slipping off and to define the trail better in the winter.

- ID tags- All of our structures have an attached Identification tag which is white , has 4 numbers starting with a “3” and a BTC label on it. They are usually found at the “Niagara” ( often south) end of the structure on the right side as they are approached. If not found, they may be on a tree or other object beside the structure or covered in mud (!) or missing. Please refer to the Trail Geography for an exact description of ID’d structures on your section. Let us know the ID number wherever possible. Some structures , especially in area where we cross conservation parks may be built and maintained by the conservation authorities.

**“Wear and Rot “ of our structures** - Many of our structures last 20 plus years ! Some wear is inevitable , especially to our decking and stairs. We buy pressure treated wood which lasts longer and treat exposed ends with a sealant solution to slow the process down. However, you should look for cracks which extend through the whole length of the wood and other signs of rot. Boardwalks may become “tippy” or uneven when the stringers and/or sleepers have rotted and need to be replaced. Inspect all the structure on your sections as you travel each time and let us know if they need attention. If you feel comfortable, please go ahead and change decking or other pieces yourself. Trail Captains can borrow tools (drills/screwdriver/crowbars, etc.) as needed from the locker. If not, contact your Zone

coordinator or the trail maintenance email address and we will help you with repairs. If the structure belongs to another authority on our trail, please also let us know and we will contact them to do their own repairs...

### **Timing of visiting your trail:**

If you go more often in the late spring, trimming of new growth is easy. If you wait until early summer there will already be far more growth that needs cutting.

### **Reporting back about your section:**

You must submit your **Trail Status Reports** three times a year- 1<sup>st</sup> of June, September and November. You can only use the Bruce Trail app to let us know about urgent problems in real time or send us an email. The app is best because it includes a picture and location of an issue.

There is still work being done on the BTC website and the TSRs and Land Steward reporting forms are not ready yet. **Please continue to use the following link for your trail reports.**

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdslzjepdtickxOlmVx7rLVvWb2EVWeUB6njAwo2TIQwz3zZA/viewform> or via the **Toronto Bruce Trail club webpage.**

### **Vegetation:**

The club now has four battery powered string trimmers. If the spring growth is cut back early in the year (May-June) there is much less work needed in the summer and the trail is much easier to maintain.

We also have a new battery pruning saw. You should wear eye protection, sawyer gloves , and work boots which are all found in the locker. The saw can cut branches of up to 4 to 5 inches in diameter.

See the details here: <https://youtu.be/QnEB9fmyXIA>

With this new tool you can clear many trees and branches that have fallen across the trail yourselves, without the need to call in a chainsaw crew. The string trimmers and all battery powered equipment needs to be reserved but we now have more options.

Be on the lookout for both invasive species and plant diseases that are threatening our native trees and plants. We will talk about this more at our in-person session in 2024.

### **Want to help more ?**

Consider joining some of our other subgroups as we look for more people periodically. We have general work parties that work on larger issues throughout the season. Each work party consists of 3-12 people working for 3-6 hours in a session. Contact your zone coordinator or us directly to go on our contact list. We have a group of dedicated sawyers who go out to remove larger trees with our chainsaws and other equipment. You must be certified on a regular basis to do this even if you have your own equipment and have sawed before. There is a certification course we offer once a year, usually in the fall. Contact Laurent Thibault for more information.

### **If you decide you are finished with your role:**

Please reach out to us with issues and we will try and sort through things with you . Positive feedback makes the work better for all of us. If you decide to stop your role for whatever reason ( busy with rest of your life, moving, not what you expected, etc.), please let us know so that we can find someone else to manage the section ... Return any equipment to the locker so that we can loan it to the next person.

## ONLINE HELP AND WORKTOOLS

There are resources online including manuals and self-help videos on a variety of topics.

**On the Bruce Trail website** , navigate there by choosing “Ways to get Involved “ at the top of the main face page , then choosing “Volunteers with us” and then “Volunteer Resources” and scroll to the bottom of the page to find all the material. **On the Toronto section Bruce Trail website**, choose “The Trail” on the main face page , then choose “Trail Maintenance” on the scroll down and scroll to the bottom of the page to find useful **links to club specific items** such as Trail Geography. When letting us know about one of our hundreds of structures, please include the ID number usually found on the right side of the “Niagara” end of it.

### The Basic Trail work guidebook :

[https://brucetrailorg.b-cdn.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Basic\\_Trail\\_Maintenance\\_Guide\\_Ed2\\_2013.pdf](https://brucetrailorg.b-cdn.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Basic_Trail_Maintenance_Guide_Ed2_2013.pdf)

### Using the Bruce Trail app as a work tool

I think 99% of Trail Captains now have cell phones (that wasn't true just 4-5 years ago!) If you have the BTC app you can use it to immediately report bigger issues that you can't deal with yourself. In 2026, the BTC will reimburse you for purchasing it. The details on how to obtain this are found on the TBTC website under “The Trail” tab at the top of the page then scrolling to “Trail Maintenance” and then on the Trail Maintenance page scroll to the bottom to find the instructions for submission .It costs \$3 per month or \$30 per year and can be found at the Apple app store or Google play. The cost can be reimbursed to you if you use the form on the TBTC website under the Trail Maintenance section. There is a free tutorial at <https://youtu.be/Ftxpm48zNhM> which can also be found on the BTC site.

To report issues using the App:

*You can use the pin function to report a Trail issue directly to our Trail maintenance team by following these steps:*

- 📍 Go to the Explore page.*
- 📍 Use the pin function to drop a pin on the location of the issue.*
- 📍 Choose “Report Trail Issue”.*
- 📍 Select a category of Trail issue and enter a description.*
- 📍 Take a photo or choose one from your photo library (optional).*
- 📍 Press “Send Report” to submit your report to the Trail maintenance team. You will see a notice pop-up saying that your report has successfully been submitted.*

### Using the Toronto Trail Geography as a work tool

We recommend using the Trail Geography of your section on your phone or printed out occasionally to use. It describes in detail the structures, terrain, signage, plaques and non-BTC features of your section. Let us know if major things have changed or are missing or damaged. You can also let us know more accurately where things are by comparing where you are to the description in the Trail Geography.

**Thank you so much for all you do, and see you on the trail!**

Tim and Neal