

Grand Manan Trails. Annual Newsletter #18
October 2010

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TRAILS UPDATE 2010 - Bob Stone



Because of high winds last winter, Jessie and Anne found that there were a tremendous number of blow-downs to clear. As a result, they each spent more than 60 hours bringing the trails back to full hiking condition. Thanks also to Holly Cronin, who lived on White Head for much of the year, the trail at the eastern end was carefully marked, so that the circumference can now be easily hiked/biked.

We were able to add some additional signs, and move a few sections back from the eroding cliffs, a never-ending task. We will make a concerted effort next spring to clear the Ross Island Trail once again. The northern part of that trail is one of the most difficult to keep in good condition. We appreciate the new welcoming signs on the Net Point



trail, which is so well looked after by the residents. In fact, thanks to thoughtful landowners and inventive trail adopters, some of our signs are taking quite a different look, as you can see.

We were very sorry to learn last fall about the death of Margot Foster who had spent parts of many summers at Harrington Cove cottages, and who loved the trails. In her obituary, the family requested that donations be given to the Friends of Grand Manan Trails. We thank the family for their thoughtfulness.

We have appreciated the information we receive from both Grand Mananers and summer people about areas that need improvement, whether it be trees down, clearer signage needed, or areas which have become dangerous. Because of Larry Smal's guided hikes, we are delighted that more islanders are enjoying the trails.



We again express thanks to Laura Buckley for her continuing generosity in hosting our annual fund-raising dinner, and, thanks to your generous donations, we raise enough money every year to continue our annual maintenance. We can be proud of the fact

that we do this without any public funding. Many thanks for your support.

LOOK WHAT THE WINDS BROUGHT IN - Roger Burrows



While most people look at storms as a time to batten down the hatches and stock up on food, water and supplies, those who study birds look on them as an opportunity to get out and look for storm-blown rarities. Since most storms track up from the Caribbean or the open Atlantic Ocean, there is always a chance of something very unusual, perhaps a southern ocean Petrel or Storm-petrel, a Frigate-bird or a Tropic-bird.



Hurricane Earl provided one more example of wind-blown waifs gathered up from the south, lifted skywards and then deposited on Maritime shorelines. While Nova Scotia bore the brunt of gale-force winds and received the majority of these birds, New Brunswick got a reasonable fallout, too. The commonest species now heading back

south to its usual winter home along the Gulf and Florida coasts is the Laughing Gull, several of which reached Grand Manan from North Head all the way down to Southern Head. I even had an adult park itself on my driveway and provide a chance for a full-frame photo op. Also present in small numbers was the Black Skimmer, one of which took up temporary residence with the roosting gulls at Seal Cove. Unfortunately, it has been AWOL each time I have traveled down to see it. Other storm-blown seabirds included Least, Sandwich and Forster's



Terns and a Sabine's Gull. It's not just seabirds that arrive with the winds.

Shorebirds are on the move this time of year and strong northerlies or northwesterlies often drive western Arctic-nesting species to our shores. There have been more Baird's Sandpipers than usual this fall and I had a chance to photograph one at close range along Thoroughfare Road recently. Events like that make Atlantic Canada Shorebird Surveys even more enjoyable than usual, adding the odd rarity to high counts of more common species. High tide counts at several Grand Manan sites have been higher than usual this year, which adds to the excitement. Songbirds also get blown off-course during their wood-warbler and sparrow is a good idea. I was rewarded with not one, but two,

Western Kingbirds in September, and at least three different Lark Sparrows. So next time the Weather Network has a weather warning for Atlantic Canada, keep your binoculars and camera ready to record another wind-blown waif.

Roger Burrows, since his emigration from England in 1970, has worked as a Parks Canada Naturalist and interpretative planner, avifaunal consultant and Elderhostel leader in Atlantic Canada, and as an onboard naturalist on Alaska cruise-ships. He has authored and co-authored ten bird books including six for Atlantic Canada. The latest one, " Birding in New Brunswick" , was published in May 20 10. He lives on Grand Manan.

THE TREE. Bob Demaline and Joan Fellows

On various trips on our trail we noticed one of the most unusual birch trees on the Island. It can be easily missed because the trail goes right under one of its massive branches, and the surrounding trees and bushes conceal much of it when you are walking south to north. It is about .6 km south of Pandora Cove meadow, or 2.6 km north of Bradford's Cove meadow.



It's only about 25 feet high, but the cliff-top winds seem to have forced it to send out strong lateral branches, 4 to 8 feet off the ground and parallel to it. There are 3 large prominent branches going roughly north, south and east. The east branch is more exposed and extends 45 feet from the trunk to the tip with no support to the ground, directly over the trail. The sprouts on this branch grow upwards and are trees themselves. This branch also has a large U, formed where we suspect

another tree, long since gone, forced the branch to grow under and around, forming an inviting place to sit. The tree is very old. It is still relatively healthy with a few rotted areas along the branches, but the food flow seems intact, with fresh leaves at the outermost extremities. We would suggest caution when climbing or sitting on the extended limb. Who knows how strong it is. The tree is magnificent as it is and will surely lose character if the limb breaks

The hike is worth it just for the tree itself; the bonus is that you have all the other great water and cliff views. We suggest late afternoon or an overcast day for this hike, so that the morning sun does not shade the coves and cliffs. Picture taking is also much better at this time.

To access the trail, we drive in Bradford's Cove Rd. (near Deep Cove) and park in the clearing, then follow the Orange Trail to Bradford's Cove, and then head north on the Red Trail to Big Head.



Bob Demaline and Joan Fellows are trail adopters for the section of the Red Trail from Bradford's Cove to Big Head and Pandora Head.

CASTALIA MARSH. *Greg McHone*

Castalia Marsh, as many of you will know, is a provincial park a few kilometres south of North Head. It is very popular with birders, but it also has some fine exposures of loose surficial or unconsolidated surface materials. At the northern end of the beaches is a bank of clay-rich mud, overlain by a layer of gravel and cobbles that might either be glacial till or an ancient beach strand.

Certainly the till was the source of the great variety of stones of all types and sizes on this beach. The grain sizes of sand, gravel, cobbles, and boulders that make up a beach are related to the average energy of the waves that pound the shoreline. Winter storms tend to create boulder beaches, while gentle summer waves bring in more sand. Beaches are not static, but constantly change over months to years

The marsh beach also shows relics of the former level of the ocean relative to the land. When the glaciers first melted away from this region, the ocean levels were much lower, and the land was also somewhat lower because it had been depressed by the weight of all that ice. So, both the sea and the land have been rising over the past 12,000 years, but the sea level has been rising faster.

Proof is found at the southern end of the beach, where layers of peat formed on land are now submerged at high tide. Pull out a small piece to see the vegetable materials, still well preserved thousands of years after the marsh plants died. Small conifer-type tree trunks (now mostly shallow roots) are washing out of the peat. They might be

tamarack or spruce, also some thousands of years old. Woody plant materials do not decay where there is no oxygen, and the peat and muck of the marsh sealed off these organic materials from the air soon after they died. Now that they are exposed to the waves, the peat and wood are rapidly washing away to rejoin the natural cycle of carbon and nitrogen through the water, air, and living things. Perhaps more worrisome to us is the evidence that the sea level is now rising very rapidly, so that by the end of the century all of Castalia Marsh might be gone, and houses near the ocean will also be in trouble.

This is taken from Greg McHone's booklet "Grand Manan Geology", about the formation of Grand Manan and the rocks and minerals one can find here. Greg McHone has been an exploration geologist, a university professor, college administrator and independent consultant. He and his geologist wife Nancy now live and work on Grand Manan. Their website is: <http://earth2geologists.net>



GRAND MANAN HIKERS - Larry Small

In the fall of 2009 I realized that many of my " Facebook friends" shared a common interest, hiking, so I started the online Facebook group "Grand Manan Hikers" as a way to plan and spread the word about hikes. It was late in the season and we only 4 sights anew, through their eyes managed two hikes that year, but this summer we hiked eight times. Although the online membership is over 200, usually only between ten and twenty actually have shown up to hike. There are a few regulars who rarely miss a hike but the rest of the group varies each time, with always a few new faces. Some have been seasoned pros, but for others it has been their first time to explore the island, and it is always a pleasure to see the island.



Ages of the hikers have varied too, from seven to seventy, and a common appreciation of natural beauty seems to span and connect the generations. Walking beneath the huge old hardwoods on the trail from the Whistle to Indian Beach always brings comments of quiet awe, and when Hay Point comes into view on the trail from Southern Head, first-timers are stunned.

This is a very informal group, with no fees, and our only means of communication is the internet, so if you'd like to hike with us next summer, sign up for Facebook and find the group "Grand Manan Hikers". We hike many Sunday afternoons, usually starting at a trail head at 1:30. Most hikes are over by 4:00 or 4:30.....and all are welcome.



And finally, I'd like to thank the GM Trails Association for all that they do to make hiking on the island such a fine, enjoyable experience.

Larry Small, a life-long islander, obviously enjoys the natural beauty of the island, and loves to share it with others. Because of his initiative, many have hiked the back of the island for the first time, and now share his appreciation for it.

A CIRCLE HIKE FROM SOUTH WEST HEAD TO DEEP COVE VIA HAY POINT AND BRADFORDS COVE'S. 3.5 Hours, including time for lunch. - *Bob Stone*

In order to complete this wonderful hike, you should have two vehicles, and perhaps a Trails Booklet which will have the map of the area to be hiked. Leave one car on the gravel road going west off the main road above the bridge at Deep Cove. Then drive south to the parking lot by South West Head Light. Head north along the western side of the island. The trail follows the cliffs closely, with spectacular views towards Maine, and the treeless Gull Heath to your right. As you approach the trees, you will find that the hiking trail joins a well-used ATV route. Just before beginning a descent into the trees, you might want to take the side trail off to the left, which ends up at a flat space with a picnic table, directly above Southern Cross. The Cross lost its arms during the Groundhog Gale in February, 1976. Then return to the main ATV trail and continue north. Because low-lying areas can be very rutted and wet, there are several detours to the left. There is a sign marking the location of the famous rescue in 1963 of two fishermen from Maine whose boat had lost power in the middle of a winter storm. After the longest of the side trails, the ATV trail continues to a camp on Bradford's Pond. But the red trail goes off to the left before reaching the camp, crossing Spring Rocks via Millen Bridge and then climbs to the right before joining the main ATV trail again.

Continue north until the red trail goes to the left. When in doubt, look for the red markers. You will pass through another boggy section and then ascend until you come to a lookout. From here you will see Hay Point below you to the north, your next destination. Upon returning to the main trail, within a few minutes you will come to a more or less open field. Continue along the trail to the left which is now descending at a steeper rate, and drops very sharply to bring you to Hay Point. Hay Point is one of the most magical places on the island. If this were Greece, this is where they would have built a temple to the gods. There is something about this mystical flat space, with the waving grass, very different from anywhere else on the island. There also is a picnic table there for your lunch. You will have been hiking between 45 minutes to an hour.



When it is time to move on, retrace your steps, climbing steeply now, and when you have successfully completed the steepest section, watch for a narrow trail which goes to the left. This will take you to a wider trail, heading north, the Low Road towards Bradford's Cove. You will be passing through a lovely wooded area, and then an area which has been clear-cut within the past few years. Look carefully, however, for the red markers, because they are visible as you work your way through the open area. As you proceed north, you will come to the junction with the High Road, an alternate way to hike from Hay Point. The trail then descends and goes inland. You are now on the south side of and parallel to Merry Brook, hearing it but not seeing it until you descend to the crossing. The trail goes to the left, now following the north bank, passing close to a rental cabin, and then to the left (this angled turn is easy to miss), coming out at Bradford's Cove. This is an ideal place to watch an active herring weir.



There is a set of ropes used by fishermen to access the beach. Enjoy the view and the rest, because the least interesting part of the hike remains. Hay Point to Bradford's Cove will have taken you about 45 minutes to an hour.

You will see a cabin at the top of the open area. Pass it on the left and continue along the ATV trail (orange). In twenty minutes or so you will come to a wide logging road which will lead to a T. Go right at the T and you will find the car you left there at the beginning. This section is also 45 minutes.

Some prefer to walk this hike in the reverse direction, completing the least interesting section first. But for the first time, I would advise hiking from south to north, because you are less likely to make a mistake. Whichever way you hike, you will have seen some of the loveliest sections of the back of the island.

SOME OF OUR TRAIL ADOPTERS.



Nils and Linda Kling have the challenging task of maintaining the Ross Island trail. Nils says they love the trail, despite the boggy terrain, the constant blow-downs, and the ever creeping grass.

Liz and Bill Edgar have adopted the very popular trail from Ashburton Head to the Whistle. It is known for the steepest climb on any trail and ever growing brambles. But as far as Liz and Bill are concerned, the fantastic views across the bay are worth the hard work of keeping it clear.



Patti Davidson and Debbie Charters happened to be hiking with Olivia Charters on the trail from Dark Harbour to Western Head when they met Anne and Jessie completing their early summer maintenance. Anne asked them if they would all be interested in adopting the trail, and, presto, we have three new trail adopters.

TRAIL ADOPTERS: 2009

Net Point - Fredonna Dean and Joanne Ingalls and family

Hole in the Wall to Whale Cove- Marilyn and Peter Cronk

Whale Cove to Eel Brook Beach- Adele Peacock , Janice and Allison Naves

Eel Brook Beach to Ashburton Head- Ineka and Jan DeVries

Ashburton Head to the Whistle- Bill and Liz Edgar

Whistle to Indian Beach- Joanne Ingalls

Dark Harbour to Western Head - Debbie and Olivia Charters, Patti Davidson

Tatton's Corners to Money Cove (yellow trail)- Marilyn and Peter Cronk

King Street to Sloop Cove- Sidney and Barbara Guptill

Big Head to Bradford's Cove- Joan Fellows and Bob Demaline

Bradford's Cove to Bradford's Pond- Cecilia Bowden and Peter Hoffman

Bradford's Pond to Southwest Head- Sheldon and Shirley Cook

South West Head to Southern Beach - Alex and Dyanne Frame

Southern Beach to Lower Flock of Sheep- Maude Hunter, Jane and Laird Sloan



Lower Flock of Sheep to Frames' property- Alex and Dyanne Frame

Frames' property to end of trail- Janice and Ed David

Ross Island- Jackie Foote, Nils and Linda Kling

Above Dark Harbour- Janna Gatta

Volunteer " Trail Adopters" look after specific trails, monitoring work needed and carrying out light maintenance. The commitment of time is not onerous. All tools and materials can be supplied from our inventory and 90% of the work done simply involves a pair of hand clippers to combat intrusive growth. Keeping us informed on current trail conditions is probably the main contribution. Let us know if you would be interested in helping out.

At large: Joel Frantzman, Judy Stone

Treasurer: Bob Stone

Overall trails maintenance- Anne Mitchell and Jessie James

Signs: Carmen and Pete Roberts

Trails Booklet: edited by Bob Stone

Pins: Cecilia Bowden

Newsletter: Frances Hodge and Bob Stone [top](#)

DONORS:

The following people have given a donation to the Trails in 2010 for a total of \$2,260. Thank you!

Doris Beresford	Carl Cohen	Roy and Kathy Wheeler
Doreen Wallace	Malcolm Bull	Mary Hawkins
Mel and Sandy Turner	James Folster	Anne and Jessie James
Mary Wylie	Ed and Norah Parker	Thomas Kearney
Lise Drisdelle-Cormier	Fundy Hiking and Nature Tours	Doreen McClare
Maurice Cormier	Henry Bierdzycki and Valerie Evans	Dyanne and Alex Frame
Debby Daws	Chris McCready and Erin O'Keefe	David Miles
Linda Duchin	Cecilia Bowden and Gene Gillies	Judy Stone
John and Paddy Duford	Anne and Steve Green	Lynn and Paul Nelson
Bev Parker	Mona Ross	Susan and Marc Shell
John and Jane Zocchi	Sue and John Stevens	Neil Shepherd

If you wish to be included on the mailing list, give a donation, receive the newsletter by email, comment on trail conditions, observations (Ex: natural history, cultural, aesthetic, etc.) or suggestions to improve the trails, please write to:

FRIENDS OF GRAND MANAN TRAILS

c/o Bob Stone

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Web: www.grandmananNB.com

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Note: Laurie Murison prepared the newsletter for the web site version.



THE GRAND MANAN TRAILS PIN

The idea that we should identify ourselves with a distinctive logo originated with one of the Island's scout leaders in 1993. When contacted, long time "Friend" O. K. Schenk promptly designed a sew-on crest which was later transformed into a lapel pin. Mr. Schenk's beautiful watercolors are well known to Islanders and are included in some of our Island Museum's displays.

The design depicts "a hard white shape symbolizing the Bunchberry (*Cornus canadensis*) which is common during the summer, and always a source of pleasure". The background colour is a dark forest green and the white flower-center (or berries) a bright red. First offered for sale in 1994 as a crest and now as a pin, they have become our principal fund raising activity. They are sold for \$5.00 each, without profit to the sellers, by a number of GMTA members. They are available at the following places: Island Arts, Marathon Inn, Shorecrest Lodge, Whale Cove Cottages, Grand Manan Museum, Harrington Cove Cottages.
Thanks to all of them.



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Have a Question? E-Mail us at: info@grandmanannb.com

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