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**THE GREAT TRAIL IS YOUR GATEWAY TO CANADA'S OUTDOORS.  
EXPLORE IT!**

Canal de Lachine, Montreal, Quebec. MATH SPARKS

## INDIGENOUS CONNECTIONS ENRICH THE GREAT TRAIL EXPERIENCE

**By Adrian Alphonso**  
Member of the Board of Directors, Trails Manitoba, and founder, Clear Paths cycling group

My bond with The Great Trail in Winnipeg is a strong one. I'm an avid cyclist who loves both urban and wilderness cycling. Travelling by bike along the city's Trail sections gives me a special appreciation of the beauty in my community.

The connection has deepened for me as I've learned more about the stories the Trail tells about Winnipeg's Indigenous history and culture, including my Anishinaabe heritage.

Last summer, my friend Justin Larrivee and I led Traditional Trails – offering Indigenous cycling tours in Winnipeg's centre. One of our goals was to provide people with an

**The connection has deepened for me as I've learned more about the stories the Trail tells about Winnipeg's Indigenous history and culture, including my Anishinaabe heritage.**

opportunity to engage in outdoor physical activity and to develop an appreciation of the joys of cycling. What better way to get exercise than through an activity that also connects you with the land around you?

Our tours began at Forks National Historic Site in downtown Winnipeg, at the confluence of the Red and the Assiniboine Rivers. The Forks is known as the "meeting place" – a place that brought together Indigenous peoples dating back 6,000 years. Later, it also became a significant site for traders and settlers from faraway lands.

The South Point pathway was recently given the official name of Niizhoziibeian, which is "two rivers" in the Ojibway language. At a ceremony, Niigaan Sinclair, associate professor in the Department of Native Studies at the University of Manitoba,



Winnipeg's Adrian Alphonso believes cycling on The Great Trail builds valuable connections to the outdoors and heritage. DANIEL BAYLIS

described the significance of the renaming: "Niizhoziibeian not only embodies the spirit of the traditional past of the Forks, but also enhances our understanding of what this place means – a collaborative space where people have been coming together to trade, grow and make life for millennia."

Since then, I created a cycling group named Clear Paths, which aims to inspire a path towards reconciliation and to connect Indigenous people with their cultural traditions and history. A key element is to involve local Indigenous knowledge keepers to share authentic content of their connections to our natural environment.

This cultural sharing enriches everyone's experience of The Great Trail, which tells such an incredible story of all our histories.



Saint-Lambert, QC  
Photo: Jennifer Mahon

  
Trans Canada Trail  
Sentier Transcanadien

### More than a line on a map

The Great Trail of Canada is the world's longest network of recreational multi-use trails. It is the thread that connects communities and landscapes from coast to coast to coast, and it must be protected and cherished.

**Your gift will help improve this national treasure for future generations.**

It's a legacy we can all be proud of!

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# DEEPLY CONNECTED

– on the map and in spirit

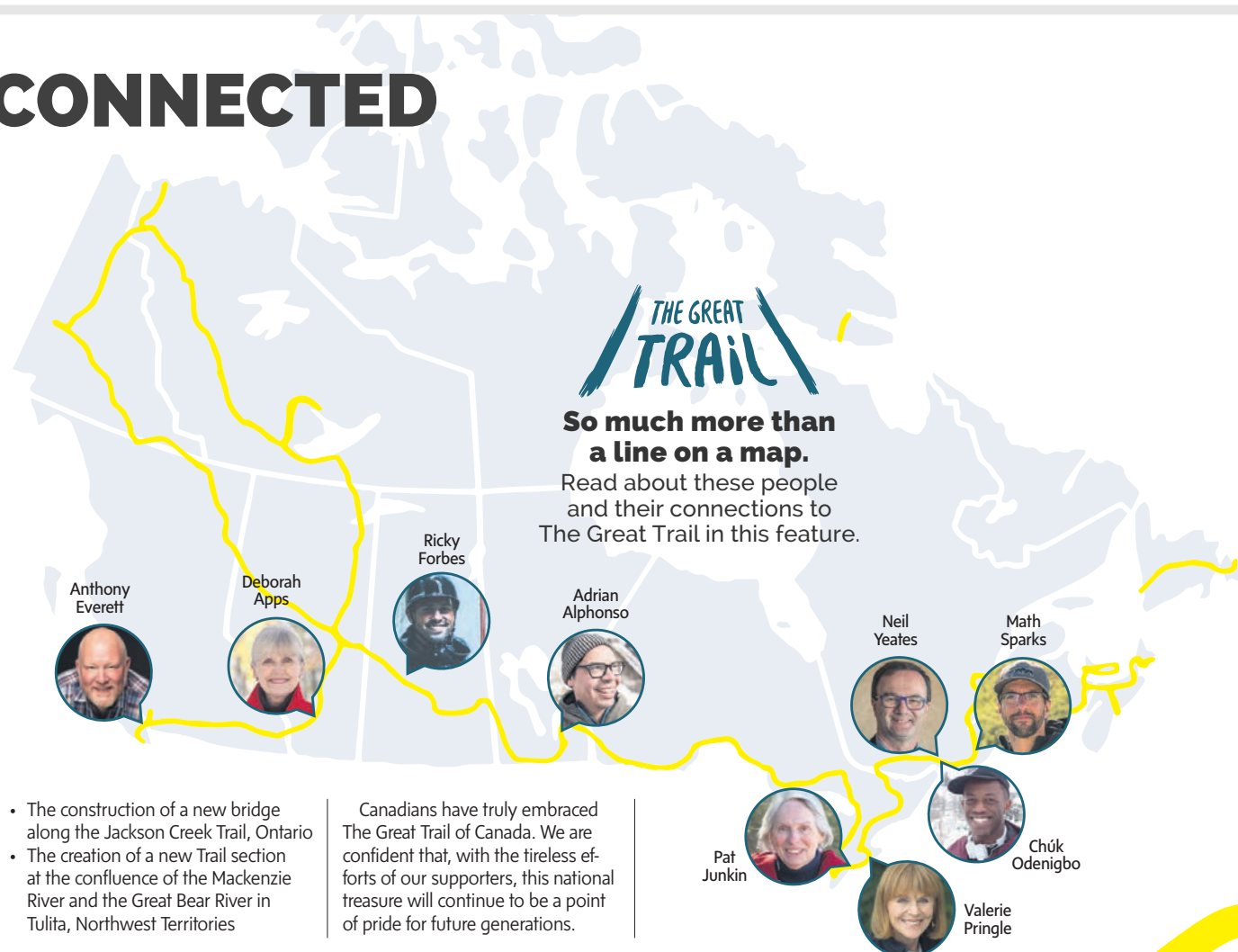
The Great Trail of Canada is the world's longest network of recreational multi-use trails, and Canadians are rightly proud of this accomplishment. The Trail's journey, however, is just beginning, and our collective mission now is to secure its legacy for generations to come.

Trans Canada Trail (TCT) continues with its multi-year campaign, *Deeply Connected*. Its purpose is to encourage Canadians and visitors to discover the depth and richness of the Trail, and to foster investment to protect and enhance the hundreds of trails that create the cross-Canada network.

Over the past year, TCT has worked with donors, supporters and volunteers to develop new Trail sections and support existing ones, to convert roadways to greenways where possible, and to support the repair of damage caused by natural disasters.

Generous donations have empowered TCT to provide funding to 76 Trail improvement projects in 2018, including the following:

- A new greenway at the Colinton Bridge along the Athabasca Landing Trail, Alberta



- The construction of a new bridge along the Jackson Creek Trail, Ontario
- The creation of a new Trail section at the confluence of the Mackenzie River and the Great Bear River in Tulita, Northwest Territories

Canadians have truly embraced The Great Trail of Canada. We are confident that, with the tireless efforts of our supporters, this national treasure will continue to be a point of pride for future generations.

## MEMORABLE ADVENTURES ON THE TRAIL

Let the journey be your destination

### Tip-to-tip: a four-day cycling itinerary along the Confederation Trail



DANIEL BAYLIS

While there are countless ways to explore the Confederation Trail, the classic method is "tip-to-tip." This 273-kilometre route takes you to regions of Prince Edward Island (P.E.I.) that most travellers don't experience, with scenic countryside, hidden culinary gems and long stretches of leaf-covered corridors. And, the flat terrain is ideal for a relaxed cycling pace.

Here are some destination highlights from this four-day itinerary.

#### DAY ONE: Tignish to Wellington (89 kilometres)

Tignish, which derives its name from the Mi'kmaq word "Mtagunich" – meaning "paddle" – is considered "kilometre zero" of the Confederation Trail. Make sure to snap a selfie at the trailhead!

In O'Leary, enjoy an emblematic P.E.I. experience at the Canadian Potato Museum and sample baked potatoes, poutine, potato skins and more from its country-style kitchen. Lunch is also available at the charming Maple House Bakery.

The Acadian community of Wellington was originally a mill town and an important stop on the former P.E.I. railway. Fifty-five per cent of the population here speak French as a first language. Consider staying the night at Chez Yvette Bed & Breakfast.

#### DAY TWO: Wellington to Hunter River (64 kilometres)

Summerside is a quiet seaside community and the Island's second-largest city, and is notable for its green energy initiatives. History buffs will enjoy visiting the Summer Street Post Office – a National Historic Site of Canada.

Kensington is home to another National Historic Site, the former Kensington Railway Station – the train station in the 1985 screen adaptation of Anne of Green Gables.

Hunter River offers evening entertainment at the Harmony House Theatre – one of P.E.I.'s top venues for music and comedy. Accommodation is available at the Heritage Classic Inn.

#### DAY THREE: Hunter River to Mount Stewart (51 kilometres)

Royalty Junction, adjacent to the Charlottetown airport, was an important location of the former P.E.I. railway.

Mount Stewart is home to the popular Trailside Café & Inn, which offers a renowned brunch and intimate evening concerts. You can stay overnight at Bishop's Rest, a renovated former parochial house.

#### DAY FOUR: Mount Stewart to Elmira (67 kilometres)

In Morell, you will find an information centre, art gallery, and outfitter for cycling and fishing. Golfers have access to the Rodd Crowbush Golf & Beach Resort just a few kilometres away.

The trail between Morell and St. Peters is one of the most scenic stretches of the Confederation Trail, with views over St. Peters Bay and plenty of bridges. The turnoff to the popular seaside town of Souris is in St. Peters, and the leafy green canopies along the route are stunning.

Your Confederation Trail "tip-to-tip" adventure ends at Elmira. To see the easternmost point of the Island, keep cycling about 10 kilometres farther to the East Point Lighthouse.

### A long-weekend cycling trip in the Laurentians: le P'tit Train du Nord



DANIEL BAYLIS

Le P'tit Train du Nord in Quebec is a 232-kilometre linear park that follows a former railway line from Bois-des-Filons outside Montreal to the town of Mont-Laurier. Summer along Le P'tit Train du Nord is a feast for the senses: lush greenspaces, striking mountains and lazy rivers. The trail surface is either asphalt or crushed stone, making it accessible for cycling.

Here are some destination highlights for your trip.

#### DAY ONE: Mont-Laurier to Nominique (58 kilometres)

Mont-Laurier is the northern trailhead of Le P'tit Train du Nord. The town offers a good selection of hotels, and the Gare de Mont-Laurier also features a bike repair station for any last tune-ups before you set out.

Lac-des-Écorces (translation: Bark Lake) is a great place to stock up on supplies for your journey, with a pharmacy and grocery store. If you arrive at the end of July, you can enjoy the Festival de Musique Country de Lac-des-Écorces.

Nominique features a train station built in 1904. Each summer, the station is turned into an exhibition centre with antique photographs

and other displays about regional history, local handmade crafts and, on occasion, live musicians. Accommodation is offered at Auberge Chez Ignace, a culinary-centred country inn on the edge of Nominique Lake.

#### DAY TWO: Nominique to Mont-Tremblant (63 kilometres)

Rivière-Rouge is named for the Rouge River – a tributary of the Ottawa River that runs through the area. Along the trail you'll find a tourist welcome office, an exhibition centre and a mini water park.

Labelle is an attractive hamlet where you can stop to eat and learn about the area's former rail line. La Gare de Labelle offers a selection of hearty meals, and cyclists can also use the nearby bike repair station.

The European-style village of Mont-Tremblant and surrounding region offer several days' worth of exploration. In the summer, make a trip to the top of Tremblant – the highest peak in the Laurentians – to enjoy beautiful views. The Panoramic Gondola will zip you to the summit in minutes, while more ambitious adventurers can hike all the way up. Boutiques and gourmet bistros are plentiful.

Close to the main village, the homey Auberge Le Voyageur B&B is a popular accommodation choice for cyclists.

#### DAY THREE: Mont-Tremblant to Saint-Jérôme (91 kilometres)

Val-David is the cradle of rock climbing in Quebec and is also famous for its artistic character, making it a wonderful place to stop for a meal or an overnight stay. Among the popular restaurants is bistro Le Mouton Noir. Meanwhile, craft aficionados will enjoy Boutique Galerie Kinya Ishikawa.

Sainte-Adèle is home to the official headquarters of Le P'tit Train du Nord, where visitors are always warmly welcomed. For a relaxing break, pause to stretch your legs along the edge of Rivière du Nord, or have a cappuccino at Café de la Gare.

Saint-Jérôme is located at "kilometre zero" of this Trail section and features heritage panels throughout town. Visit the Place de la Gare, which offers picnic tables, water fountains and tourist information.

### Journey: accessible adventures on Vancouver Island



DANIEL BAYLIS

The Great Trail on Vancouver Island offers vistas of spawning salmon creeks and places to explore the historic sites of the region. The island's sections of the Trail are focal points for outdoor enthusiasts, and a user-friendly cornerstone on a trip to Canada's most temperate climate. Many of these sections are also designed to be enjoyed by people of varying abilities.

Discover these sections for yourself on an inclusive three-day itinerary, with everything from untamed nature to craft beverages and live theatre.

#### DAY ONE: Victoria to Cowichan Bay

Just 20 kilometres north of Victoria, Goldstream Provincial Park's natural beauty attracts visitors year-round and is a popular starting point for exploring The Great Trail. The wheelchair-accessible trails cut through the dense vegetation that is emblematic of Vancouver Island, carving a path around tall sword ferns and near rushing rivers.

Next, leave the Trail and take a break at Merridale Cider & Distillery. Here, paved paths take you on a self-guided tour of the distillery and the orchard, and back to the bistro for local fare and samples at the tasting bar. Stock up on some cider for later!

After lunch, take a detour to Cowichan Bay, a quaint village with an incredible community of local artisans, delectable eats and ocean vistas.

## A REFUGE IN NATURE

Quebec photographer finds renewal and builds a legacy for the next generation on The Great Trail of Canada

In Math Sparks's family, a love of the outdoors has been handed down from generation to generation. Mr. Sparks, a Quebec-based landscape photographer, lives just south of Montreal and a short distance from The Great Trail.

He says that the way he teaches his seven-year-old daughter to appreciate nature is also the way his parents taught him to treasure the fresh air, the thrills and the discovery of the Canadian outdoors.

"This can be a never-ending story," he says. "We grew up with the same values of cherishing the moment, enjoying nature and spending time together outdoors. Canada is so big, beautiful and diverse, and I hope my daughter, if she decides to have children, will also develop in them a love of The Great Trail."

The Great Trail is the longest



Photographer Math Sparks says exploring the Trail reminds him that the ecosystem is fragile and must be preserved. SUPPLIED

network of recreational trails in the world and cuts a swath through the entire country, from Yukon to the Rocky Mountains to the Atlantic Ocean.

A symbol of Canadian ingenuity mixed with our greatest natural resource, the Trail offers something for everyone, from hiking and paddling to skiing, cycling and more – for experts and beginners and everyone in between. For Mr. Sparks, it provides not only a chance to make the most of our natural environment, but also a chance to appreciate life.

"I used to be a forensic photographer for the police in Montreal, and after a particular crime scene, I developed post-traumatic stress syndrome," says Mr. Sparks.

To counteract what he'd experience at work, the 34-year-old

naturalist would enjoy biking on the Trail near his family home in Chambly, cross-country skiing between Val-David and Sainte-Adèle in the Laurentians, and paddle boarding in Labelle.

The outdoors became his refuge. The Great Trail became a place to reconnect with his humanity, equanimity and peace of mind.

"I came to rely upon the serenity of being outside and clearing my mind of everything," he says. "The minute you go outside, it's the present moment, and it's inspiring to share that with the people I love."

A love of nature breeds a natural tendency to protect our environment, and along with feeling renewed by The Great Trail's rivers and pathways, mountaintops and streams, Mr. Sparks also has a strong belief in the value of conservation.

His family's legacy won't just be teaching his daughter how to paddle board and cross-country ski, but also letting her know why it's important to respect our environment.

"I believe the more time you spend outside, the more you understand that our place in nature is a circle – the ecosystem is fragile and it's important that we all live in harmony," Mr. Sparks says.

"The way I was raised is the way my father was raised and the way that today I'm raising my little girl. There are beautiful landscapes in this country along The Great Trail, and we honour it from east to west and north to south. We could focus on what divides us, but respecting the Trail is unifying – it's what unites us as families, as Canadians."

The Journey is just getting started. Get inspired by 15 one-day, weekend and multi-day itineraries on the Trail across Canada.

# OUR CHERISHED TRAIL SECTIONS

TCT leaders reflect on their connection to The Great Trail of Canada

**"My Trail is along the beautiful Niagara River, where I get my marching, my fresh air and my meditation (interrupted by calls for my dogs: 'George! Jake!')."**



**It is quotidian – both mindful and mindless as thought bubbles come and go. Are the boats in yet? Have the leaves fully turned? Where are the birds? There are so many bicycles today!**

**It is my sanctuary, and I am so lucky to have this piece of The Great Trail that is mine.**

**It makes me very happy. To paraphrase Thoreau: 'I took a walk on the Trail and came out taller.'"**

Valerie Pringle,  
Chair of the TCT Foundation Board of Directors

**"My favourite sections of The Great Trail are in the Rocky Mountains around Canmore, Alberta, where I live for three months or so of the year. The Great Trail extends through the Rocky Mountain Parks and into the Spray Lakes and Kananaskis. This is fabulous country. I love the mountains and the feeling of freedom they bring."**

Neil Yeates,  
Chair of the TCT Board of Directors



**"I often find myself, with my family, on The Great Trail near my home in Calgary, where it passes through the beautiful Glenbow Ranch Provincial Park and Fish Creek Park. However, my involvement with the Trail has given me the wonderful opportunity to explore many sections across Canada."**

**Each of the Trail sections I have visited has its own special meaning and memories for me, and I think that's the joy of our national Trail. No matter where you're coming from or where you're going, you can find something on the Trail that stirs something in you."**

Deborah Apps,  
President & CEO of Trans Canada Trail

Valerie Pringle,  
Chair of the TCT Foundation Board of Directors

Deborah Apps,  
President & CEO of Trans Canada Trail

Explore the village before settling in for the evening at the Oceanfront Inn & Suites. Now might be the perfect time to celebrate with the cider you conveniently picked up earlier!

## DAY TWO: Cowichan Valley Trail

A one-kilometre trail of hard-packed gravel leads you from the parking lot to the Kinsol Trestle – a former rail line that was restored into a spectacular crossing over the Koksilah River. Check out the different viewpoints along the 187-metre trestle before making your way back to the car.

For lunch, try wood-fired Neapolitan pizza crafted with the best ingredients. Just 25 minutes from the trestle and conveniently located en route north, Pizzeria Prima Strada is right off the main highway, making it a logical stop – not to mention home to a sunny patio, views of the valley and some of the best pizza on the island.

Switch gears and enjoy a culture-filled afternoon with your first stop at The Ou Gallery in Duncan, where resident contemporary artists take inspiration from the landscapes and people of Vancouver Island. Then wrap up the day in Chemainus, a charming town on the Cowichan Valley Trail that's world-renowned for its murals and live theatre.

If you have some down time before heading to a show at the Chemainus Theatre Festival, check into your room at the Best Western Chemainus and visit Riot Brewing for a craft beer.

## DAY THREE: Nanaimo's Waterfront

After a packed two days, it's time to slow things down in Nanaimo. Just a 30-minute drive north of Chemainus, this coastal city is the hub of central Vancouver Island. The Great Trail extends along the city's waterfront walkway, a conveniently paved route for an adaptive handcycle.

This waterfront path winds along the marina and past shops and art installations. When you're ready for a bite to eat, grab a table at the Lighthouse Bistro and watch float planes come and go in the harbour.

For this night on Vancouver Island, cozy up at the Inn on Long Lake, enjoy the sheltered waterfront hot tub and relax underneath the night sky.

## Three days, three adventures: a Manitoba itinerary



DANIEL BAYLIS

The Winnipeg region features an incredible diversity of trails, both in the city and within about an hour's drive. This itinerary is all about options. Choose to drive to all the attractions, or select the most appealing highlights and devote an entire day to their exploration.

### DAY ONE: Winnipeg

The name "Winnipeg" comes from Cree for "muddy waters." The region was a trading centre for Indigenous peoples long before the arrival of Europeans – and these days, Winnipeg has a rich mixture of cultures including a significant Indigenous population.

Located at the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, The Forks is steeped in history. Dating back 6,000 years, this intersection was the meeting place of Indigenous peoples and eventually became a headquarters for trappers and traders from Europe. Today, it is the cultural and culinary hub of Winnipeg.

Visit The Great Trail pavilion to learn about the hundreds of people who have donated time and money to help create sections of the Trail in Manitoba. One of Winnipeg's most popular attractions is The Forks Market, a historic shopping and dining complex.

St-Boniface, the centre of Manitoba's French community, is known for picturesque bistros with classic French cuisine and spirited live

music. Le Musée de St-Boniface is a National Historic Site, the oldest structure in the city of Winnipeg and the largest oak log building in North America. The museum features artifacts of French-speaking and Métis societies.

The Louis Riel Commemorative Site tells the story of the man who led the Red River Rebellion of 1869 and played a critical role in the founding of the province of Manitoba. Riel was recognized for his efforts to protect the land rights of Métis peoples and the language rights of French-speaking citizens.

The Canadian Museum of Human Rights is one of Canada's finest museums and offers a journey from darkness to light.

### DAY TWO: Pinawa Trail

The Pinawa Trail is a well-maintained path that runs through grasslands, granite shield and boreal forest, and offers Trail users the opportunity to see deer, rare birds and other wildlife, as well as views of rivers and dams.

The Pinawa Dam was a technological triumph in its day, but now, Manitoba's first hydro-electric station is a blend of park space and crumbling archeology.

The 54-metre Pinawa Heritage Suspension Bridge was constructed by local volunteers and formally opened in 1999. It is part of a loop for interpretive walks and activities, from casual fishing in warmer months to cross-country skiing in winter.

### DAY THREE: Crow Wing Trail

The 191-kilometre Crow Wing Trail is the longest section of The Great Trail in Manitoba. It connects Winnipeg to Emerson (at the Canada-U.S. border), closely following the Red River ox-cart routes used in the mid-1800s to transport goods and people between Winnipeg and St. Paul, Minnesota.

Learn more about this storied trail at the Crow Wing Trail Monument, on the grounds of the St-Pierre-Jolys Museum.

Shorter trail loops include the loop that goes around St. Malo Lake and another loop along the Roseau River and across the Senkiw Swinging Bridge.

## ADVENTURES BIG AND SMALL

Finding your unique "call of the wild" on The Great Trail

Nature can lure us in many ways. We may seek the tranquility of being on our own alongside a gently flowing stream or may feel energized to conquer the obstacle of a swift river or a steep cliff. Contemplative solitude or high-octane adventure – both experiences and everything in between are available along The Great Trail.

For Ricky Forbes, connecting with Canada's wilderness is typically an adrenaline-fuelled encounter. In his world, nature is powerful and sometimes risky, and he wouldn't have it any other way. In fact, this 32-year-old from Saskatoon has built a career on confronting nature's challenges head on.

Mr. Forbes is one of the hosts of the TV show *Tornado Hunters*,



Outdoor adventurer Ricky Forbes found canyoneering near Squamish both exciting and deeply moving. SUPPLIED

in which he and his colleagues pursue and record fierce storms throughout North America for six months of the year. He also hosts other outdoors-themed programs and spends much of his time doing every imaginable outdoor activity – from mountain biking and rock climbing to snowmobiling and whitewater kayaking.

Last summer, Mr. Forbes took part in one of those rare outdoor activities he had not yet tried – canyoneering, which consists of rappelling down a canyon over waterfalls. The location was just off the Sea to Sky Marine Trail in Squamish, British Columbia – part of a two-and-a-half-week tour sponsored by CLIF Bar and KEEN Canada, partners of The Great Trail. Along the way from Saskatoon to the West Coast, Ricky documented his travels and the diversity of the Trail's offerings through images, videos and stories posted on Instagram.

"Squamish is a magical place to experience the Trail, which starts right on the edge of the Pacific Ocean," he says. "As we drank our morning coffee at a spot in downtown Squamish, we could look up and see the mountains of the Tantalus Range, where we would soon be headed. After a quick drive, we reached the edge of the Squamish River, ready to cross it by kayak."

At every stop along his Trail journey, Mr. Forbes connected with local adventurers, journalists and athletes who could help him experience the best that each site had to offer. In Squamish, that local expert was Bradford McArthur, an adventurer, filmmaker and digital media specialist.

"I was very excited when Bradford proposed canyoneering. I had never done it before and it sounded like the type of adrenaline-pumping adventure I love," Mr. Forbes says. "I must admit the prospect was somewhat intimidating, but I knew that Bradford had the know-how to guide me through it."

Equipped with ropes and harnesses, the two men hiked for two hours up a mountain in Squamish's Monmouth Canyon area, where they entered a section called the Box Canyon gorge. Once inside the gorge, they climbed down to the creek bottom and rappelled farther downward over the rocky formation's many waterfalls. The experience had an impact on Ricky that he hadn't fully expected.

"What drove me was the adventure, the adrenaline side of going over waterfalls, but it gave me so much more," he recalls.

"The mountains are so vast, and you feel so small. When you get down into those waterbeds and creeks, you look up and see the mountains skyrocketing above you and the sun shining through the massive rainforests hanging over the top. It was deeply moving."

All his Trail experiences last summer reinforced Mr. Forbes' understanding that The Great Trail offers many powerful ways to interact with nature.

"The Trail is accessible from every part of Canada, and it offers you adventures big and small. There is something for everyone. There's not much in this world that's better than being outdoors in Canada and feeling part of something bigger than yourself."

## A TRAIL FOR ONE AND ALL

Enhancing accessibility on Vancouver Island

As varied as The Great Trail is, so are its users. Indeed, people with disabilities and other challenges can enjoy numerous activities and explore Canada's great outdoors on the Trail – thanks to the enhanced accessibility of certain Trail sections. Maintaining and improving accessibility on trails and at other destinations is part of the new action plan for Tourism Vancouver Island (TVI), one of Trans Canada Trail's tourism partners.

"Tourism has the ability to change your world view, impact your life in a positive way and connect people. For that reason alone, we know we need to increase our inclusive travel opportunities so that more people can experience Vancouver Island," says Anthony Everett, TVI president and CEO. The Great Trail in particular, he adds,

with its wide paths and consistent grades, presents a phenomenal opportunity for travellers with disabilities to visit different parts of the island.

Take the Cowichan Valley Trail, home to the historic 45-metre Kinsol Trestle – one of the tallest free-standing timber rail crossings in the world. Not only was the 1920s-era structure completely rehabilitated, but the trail leading to the structure was also lined with fine gravel. A new parking lot and accessible viewpoints were also added.

"By raising awareness of the Cowichan Valley's accessible tourism experiences, we can help disperse visitors from urban areas like Victoria and bring benefit to the many rural businesses in the valley," says Mr. Everett.

Since the Kinsol Trestle's restora-

tion, Janet Docherty has noticed an increase in guests at her Merridale Cidery & Distillery. Located a mere eight kilometres off the Trail, the property's fully accessible alfresco eatery, tasting lounge and self-guided tours make for the perfect après hike or bike spot. (After all, what better way to end a day on the Trail than over a bowl of cider-braised beef and apple stew, with a crisp Cowichan Dry craft cider or a swig of the newly released honey-sweetened liquor, Rhumb?)

"What's happening on all of Vancouver Island now with the trails is inclusivity, that connection to nature and how we're blending those tourism products around it," says Ms. Docherty, who has owned and operated Merridale with her husband, Rick Pipes, for 20 years and counting.

Power to Be is an expert advisor to TVI on accessibility and inclusivity, and creates programs for people living with a diverse range of challenges and abilities – from acquired brain injuries and mobility issues to mental health considerations and autism. Connecting people to nature is the Victoria-based organization's raison d'être. "Our goal is to connect people to natural surroundings so they can experience the outdoors and get the residual benefits that happen when anybody is in nature," says Carinna Kenigsberg, manager of community partnerships at Power to Be.

TCT continues to work closely with TVI and Power to Be to support and promote experiences that resonate with people of all ages and abilities along Vancouver Island's section of the Trail.

Visit [www.thegreattrail.ca/journeys](http://www.thegreattrail.ca/journeys).

# NATURE AND FREEDOM STRONGLY LINKED

Science tells us our health benefits from outdoor experiences.

The word freedom has sparked countless revolutions across the world. It's a word that resonates in our hearts; something that we constantly desire. Our innate yearning for freedom makes sense, since it has been shown to be an essential component of human health. In fact, people who feel "free" are less likely to die prematurely or even get sick!

For something so important to us, what does freedom even mean? Freedom is the ability to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of any given scenario or action and act accordingly.

So how does that affect our health? Statistics and history tell us that those who control their own lives live longer. Having freedom leads to having a sense of confidence and self-efficacy – the belief that you can succeed. This reduces the likelihood of mental and physical illnesses arising from stress and depression.

Freedom also affects our health



Chúk Odenigbo is researching impacts of physical and social environments on health, as he pursues his Ph.D. in Medical Geography at the University of Ottawa. SUPPLIED

in our ability to control our life trajectory. From our early lives to the languages we speak, it can sometimes feel like our lives have been predetermined. However, it's important to remember that something seemingly small can drastically change our lives. We could meet a wonderful teacher who inspires that self-efficacy in us, or we could survive a car crash with one leg amputated. Freedom is our ability to either realize the paths we are on and alter them as we see fit, or to feel confident as we take the paths already set for us.

Many scientific and social studies have demonstrated something that many people already know: nature makes us feel freer. For example, research published in the journal, *Social Science and Medicine*, found that people who stare out at the ocean often feel a sense of awe. This awe has been linked to enhanced levels of belonging and empathy, which are key elements

to helping people to feel supported and confident. Seeing the ocean can also encourage creativity and mindfulness, according to a study in the *American Association for the Advancement of Science's* journal.

Parks, forests and green spaces also bring an immense sense of freedom. Research for Health & Place found that people who live near green spaces experience fewer feelings of loneliness and an increased perception of social support, which lead to lower instances of depression and negative feelings. Additionally, a *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* study of elderly, medically healthy people living in community homes showed that resilience to physical decline and social isolation was linked with access to the outdoors.

Even just looking at nature sparks that sense of freedom and its benefits in us. A *Journal of Environmental Psychology* study found that university students who could

see trees and other key elements of green spaces from their rooms felt less stressed and more productive – leading to better grades!

Humans have a natural tendency to gravitate towards nature. Why? It gives us a sense of freedom – whether that takes the shape of independence, a sense of belonging or awe. We are all different, on different trajectories with different opinions and thoughts. Regardless, the outdoors and nature remain key components of who we are.

Freedom is guaranteed in both our nation's charter and the UN Declaration of Human Rights. All human beings have a right to be free, and nature helps us achieve this right. As such, we all need to discover our way of getting outdoors and connecting with nature – because we all deserve freedom.

This article was written by Trans Canada Trail contributor, Chúk Odenigbo.

## TREASURE HUNT RETURNS FOR 2019



The happy faces of just some of the Trail explorers who found boxes in the 2018 Great Trail Treasure Hunt. There will be twice as many treasure boxes to uncover this year – 200 across the country.

Trans Canada Trail (TCT) and the Royal Canadian Geographical Society (RCGS) are joining forces again to invite Canadians to find hidden treasure along The Great

Trail of Canada. With the support of numerous sponsors, The Great Trail Treasure Hunt is set to take place from Wednesday, June 19 to Sunday, August 18, 2019.

This year, 200 treasure boxes – twice as many as last year – will be waiting to be discovered in every province and territory in Canada. Anyone who finds a treasure box

and enters the contest will have a chance of winning some amazing prizes.

In 2018, The Great Trail Treasure Hunt turned Canadians of all ages into avid Trail explorers. One woman from Yukon – who found the two boxes in her own territory – was so inspired that she took a flight to Nova Scotia to find more.

Many families, young people and retirees also joined the hunt, including Janet Shellnutt from Dartmouth in Nova Scotia. After finding a box on her local section of the Trail, Janet won the grand prize of a trip for two on board a One Ocean Expeditions voyage to Labrador and Torngat Mountains National Park.

"The Great Trail Treasure Hunt in 2018 was one of the biggest and most exciting events TCT has ever hosted, and we're thrilled to

make it happen again this year," said Danielle St-Aubin, TCT's vice president, Communications and Marketing.

"Now that we have twice as many treasure boxes, we're hoping to get even more people out exploring the Trail in their own communities and across Canada."

To stay up-to-date with the latest announcements and news about this year's treasure hunt, follow The Great Trail on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.



Trans Canada Trail

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For many years, well-known Canadians have lent their energy and enthusiasm to help us build the Trail. We thank them for their invaluable support. For a full list of champions, visit: [thegreattrail.ca/champions](http://thegreattrail.ca/champions).

## ROADWAY SAFETY

Along with greenways and waterways, roadways are part of The Great Trail of Canada

The scope and diversity of The Great Trail mirror the varied majesty of the Canadian landscape. Stretching over 24,000 kilometres across the country, this massive trail of trails comprises over 400 sections on land and water – through areas that range from rugged backcountry to urban streets with historic monuments.

The mix of geography gives Trail users a choice of activities, including walking/hiking, cycling, paddling, horseback riding, cross-country skiing and snowmobiling. While many Canadians enjoy short excursions on the Trail close to home, others venture over longer distances, and travelling by bicycle is a popular option.

If you are planning a long-distance cycling tour, it is important to understand that The Great Trail is not a continuous off-road cycling path. Roadways are also part of the Trail, making up approximately 30 per cent of the total network.

For the touring cyclist who wishes to travel the Trail from community to community, roadways are often a necessary part of the journey. And roadways sometimes provide the cyclist with a smoother riding surface, a more direct route and the opportunity to cycle faster.

Of course, cycling on roadways means that you are sharing your path with motorized vehicles. Although many seasoned cyclists are used to travelling by road and understand safe practices, it is always wise to plan your routes carefully, research any rules specific to your chosen roadways and remain vigilant during your journey.

Trans Canada Trail (TCT) encourages everyone who uses roadways on The Great Trail to proceed with caution and to follow all rules of the road. Trail users on roadways should also pay attention to their surroundings and to other people or vehicles around them. If you are cycling, TCT recommends that you don't use mobile devices or headphones and that you wear a helmet – even though provinces and territories have varying laws governing helmet use.

The Great Trail continues to evolve, and new Trail sections will be added over time. For instance, some existing roadway stretches are interim links between Trail

sections. In the future, these links will be replaced with greenway or waterway, where demand and capacity exist.

However, roadways will continue to be an important part of The Great Trail. In some regions, there are fewer Trail users and limited resources for Trail development and maintenance. In others, there are environmental protection, conservation and sustainability challenges. In addition, some urban areas have limited space for greenways.

Roadways also contribute to a diverse Trail experience, and many users appreciate the beauty of the landscapes that exist along these Trail sections. Spectacular roadways along the Trail include the Saskatoon to Duck Lake route in Saskatchewan, and the Dempster Highway in Yukon and the Northwest Territories.

For more about the Trail near you, visit [www.thegreattrail.ca/explore-the-map](http://www.thegreattrail.ca/explore-the-map).



Trans Canada Trail encourages everyone who uses roadways on The Great Trail to proceed with caution and to follow all rules of the road. GEORGE FISHER

## A GIFT TO FUTURE GENERATIONS

Providing a legacy to preserve The Great Trail of Canada

Pat Junkin has many positive memories of enjoying The Great Trail and is grateful for the gifts it provides, including access to a measure of comfort and peace in difficult times.

"Nature is the greatest healer," she says. "Throughout my life, and especially in the hardest moments, I've found solace in the great outdoors."

Pat particularly cherishes memories of the years when she and her long-time partner Harold owned a lake resort near Lindsay, Ontario, located just two blocks from an access point to the Trail.

"Harold shared my passion for the outdoors and, together, we took much pleasure in helping our guests to enjoy it, too.

"We often crossed paths with visitors exploring the Trail: hikers and cyclists, troops of Scouts, snowmobilers and cross-country skiers," Ms. Junkin recalls. "They would stop and



With her legacy gift to The Great Trail, Pat Junkin is expressing her desire to see future generations share in the Trail's natural wonders. SUPPLIED

camp with us for a night or two, share the stories of where they'd come from and what they'd seen, and then continue their journeys."

In 1996, the couple sold the resort and moved to the Niagara area. In the intervening years, Harold, as well as Pat's son, passed away. Currently living in Welland, Pat has new opportunities to venture onto The Great Trail – explorations that have helped her deal with her own losses and allowed her to support others in coping with theirs.

She shares her appreciation of nature's healing powers through her volunteer work at a hospice in her community. Once a week, she and other volunteers go walking on the Trail with people who have lost a loved one.

"We call them 'grief walks.' Walking on the Trail is a beautiful way for folks who have lost someone to process their grief, to ground themselves in nature and to find some peace," she says.

In her group, the walk begins on the Merritt Trail, an 11-kilometre stretch of The Great Trail that begins in St. Catharines with a gentle descent down a small hill onto a flat

path that follows Twelve Mile Creek.

"The idea is that people who are grieving connect with someone who has experienced a loss too, and some amazing friendships and long-lasting support systems have come out of these groups.

"There is something about being in nature that calms you down and levels you out when dealing with loss. It helps you feel more at peace."

To honour her memories and to act on her desire to see future generations share the wonders of Canada's natural environment, Pat has donated to Trans Canada Trail for the past 20 years and is leaving the organization a gift in her will.

"This gift is a tribute to Harold and my son, both of whom loved connecting with nature. I like to think about all the people in the future who will be able to hike, bike and paddle their way across The Great Trail because I decided to do my part," she says.

"If someone finds healing, or calm, or a connection to our world through an experience on the Trail, then I think that's a pretty good legacy to leave behind."