

# Pathways Newsletter



The Pathways for People newsletter is published three times a year and shares trail stories and updates, events and local news on infrastructure work happening across Norfolk County

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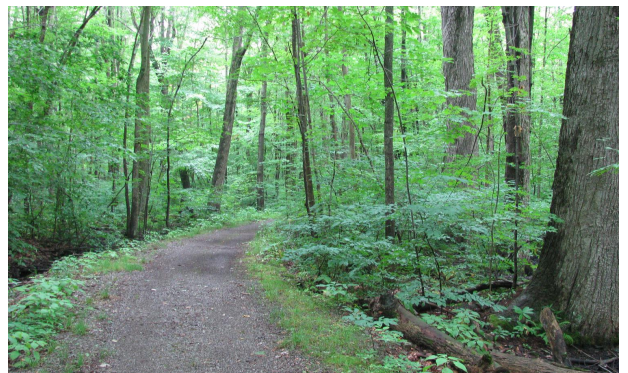
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## P4P Website

P4P is excited to share that our website has been updated to a more modern look. All the same great content is available

**Visit us online at**  
**[www.norfolkpathways.ca](http://www.norfolkpathways.ca)**



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## WINTER WALK & UTILIZING THE TRAILS DURING COVID-19

Submitted by Crystal Usher on behalf of the Community Health Team,  
Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit

### Winter Walk – Huge success

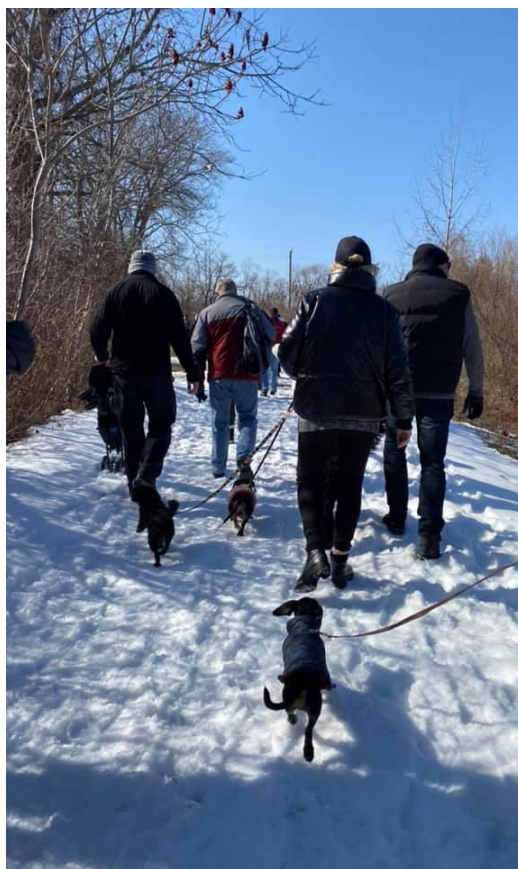
A big thank you goes out to all who attended our largest winter walk yet! Long Point Eco Adventures kindly let us utilize their trails on a beautiful, sunny winter afternoon to go on a guided trail walk. 183 people joined in on the walk led by P4P member Rob Luke on February 23, 2020 at 2pm. Stay tuned for future events held by Pathways for People.

### Utilizing the trails and getting outdoors during COVID-19

Here are a few recommendations and precautions to take during trail-use throughout COVID-19.

1. Stop and let people pass. Always do your best to keep 6 feet/2 meters of distance between you and another trail user.
2. Stay hydrated, take breaks and locate shade if you are feeling warm or fatigued.
3. Be sure to sanitize hands and equipment before and after use.
4. Get out and enjoy the great outdoors!

Getting out and being active can help improve your mood and overall health. Try getting members of your family out and about to see what Norfolk County has to offer through our extensive trail systems.



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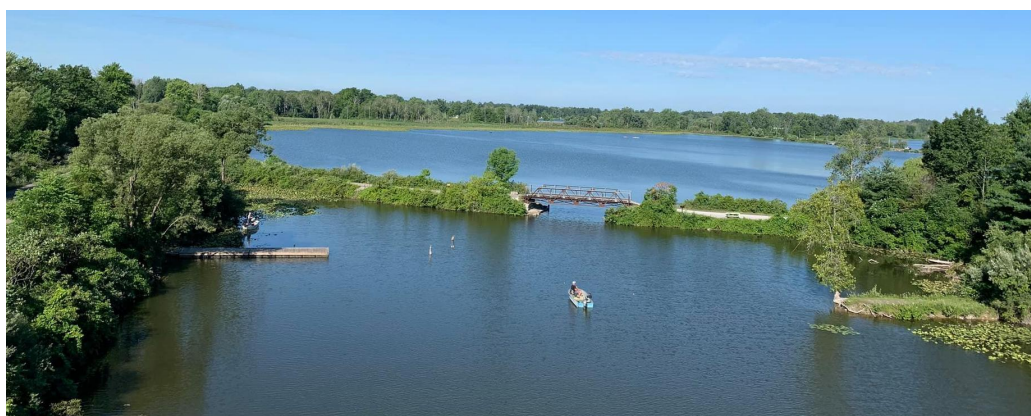
## CLOSING OF THE TRAILS DURING COVID-19

Submitted by Frank Woodcock

On May 1, 2020 P4P sent an e-mail to the Norfolk County Board of Health recommending a reopening of trails based on physical, mental and emotional health reasoning. We felt that when it comes time to decide on reopening trails, we would like to provide input. That afternoon Mayor Chopp connected with us and trails were opened shortly after.

Soon there were people out walking, running, riding the trails and being cognizant of safe distancing. People were demonstrating a need for trails and it may be said that our trails are being used now more than ever before.

The lesson learned is if trails are shut in the future, we will send another letter and encourage others to do the same. Reminding the Board of Health of the physical, mental and emotional benefits of trails.



## WATERFORD HERITAGE TRAIL REPORT

Submitted by Frank Woodcock

Waterford Heritage Trail (WHT) users were surprised when all Norfolk County Trails were closed by the Board of Health. This was to be a year of expansion and extension of our trail system. We were going to push onward to Concession 7 from College Street and complete a fitness trail to the west of the Black Bridge. COVID-19 put a “cease and desist” to our plans. However, the silver lining in this dark and stormy cloud was that people missed the trails. Board of Health signage had to be replaced and enlarged to keep people behind their tape. When the trails were reopened people returned to the trail in large numbers. Boyko Source for Sports sold out their season’s inventory of 250 bicycles. With children out of school, families took to the trails enjoying the fresh air, the views, the exercise and the science lessons awaiting curious minds. What keeps the WHT executive motivated is to see people taking advantage of our trail system as they have been doing during this unusual time. Our routines have been disrupted and to help fill the void people have been seeking things to occupy themselves and their family by biking, hiking or fishing; WHT offers all that. We will get to our expansion and extension plans in time but this is the time for people to explore and enjoy Norfolk’s trail system to the fullest. Come on out.



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## TURKEY POINT MOUNTAIN BIKE CLUB TRAILS AND COVID-19

Submitted by Rob Luke – President– Turkey Point Mountain Bike Club



The Coronavirus pandemic has created plan changes and new challenges for TPMBC; just as it has for all organizations and citizens personally. The month of January saw no snow and the club was able to ride and do maintenance on our trails. 'Motorhead', a trail on Norfolk County property, had been closed for two years for logging and was in severe disrepair. Volunteer work days saw up to 25 members at a time, reclaim the destroyed trail as the tread was re-established and 3 bridges rebuilt with a lot of hard work and elbow grease. In early March, the Ontario Cycling Association cancelled all races and advised all events be postponed. TPMBC Board of Directors promptly cancelled our April 'Spring Kicker' event. The Turkey Point Provincial Park closed all trail use on March 23rd and rightly anticipating other Government landowners to follow suit; we closed the entire trail network. Proud to say that our members and ridership complied to the fullest. We used this down time to take inventory of our trail network and equipment. Since the network has grown to 86kms. in length and we had the funds due to the support and generosity of our membership, we purchased more efficient trail cleaning equipment. The new equipment will reduce maintenance time and allow volunteers more riding time and definitely less strain on our backs!

We also used this down to create a new trail on private property. The trail was built using social distancing as bubble teams of 5 volunteers were employed at any given time during construction. The result was a very sweet Intermediate trail 1.4 kms in length. We called the new trail 'Flattening the Curve'.

On May 1st, Frank Woodcock, on behalf of 'Norfolk Pathways for People', penned a letter to the Ministry of Health and Norfolk's Mayor and Council. The letter cited the need for our local trails to be opened, due to the fact that exercise and access to open spaces are essential to the physical and mental well being of citizens. Norfolk trails could be used safely and responsibly! The message was received and trails were reopened on May 15th to the relief and joy of mountain bikers, hikers and runners! The trail rules have changed and I'm proud to say that we have had total compliance. Social Distancing guidelines such as 6' of separation and groups of no larger than 10 people are the new norm on TPMBC trails. The new mantra is and always will be, "STAY SAFE OUT THERE ON THE TRAILS."

Going forward, the club anxiously awaits the next phase of reopening by the Ontario Government. TPMBC Board of Directors are confident that we can organize a major cycling event with 3 to 4 weeks lead time and are willing to do so late into the year. For now, trail users are just very happy to have access to our trailnetwork.

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## REFLECTIONS, RESILIENCE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Submitted by- Dave Challen, President of the Lynn Valley Trail Association – On Behalf of the Board of Directors

As we continue through these unprecedented times dealing with Covid-19, I have been challenged to think about any number of things related to the Lynn Valley Trail and trails in Norfolk County in general. We have been through a lock down with no access to trails, a reopening with restrictions: including the need for physical distancing and no gathering in groups, as well as, increased respect for the space and need of other trail users. What we have seen over the past several months is an increased use of the trails by cyclists, walkers, and runners and in general a greater consideration of others in observing the "rules of the trail" by trail users. But that has not always been the case and a gentle reminder that we all need to practice "the rules of trail" follows below.

The Lynn Valley Trail Association (LVTA) has a new feature on its website titled, "Let Us Know". This allows trail users to tell us of anything they see or experience on the Trail, so we can act on it. Thus far we have received about a dozen notes to advise us of issues on the Lynn Valley Trail. Here are a few examples, with a request that we all take into account the perspective and needs of others on the trails. In addition, general trail issues have also been included.

### a) Multi-use

Trail: the Lynn Valley Trail is a multi-use trail meaning that walkers, runners and bicyclists may be using the trail, all at the same time. Cyclists need to advise others of their approach by ringing their bell or verbally warning others, slow down and proceed with caution. Walkers need to practice physical distancing while not spreading across the trail – blocking the path – and when giving way, all should move to one side, preferably to the right. This allows a cyclist from behind or in front to have a clear path to ride on. Walkers who split to both sides of the trail create a human gate that can be tricky, and even dangerous, for all to navigate.

### b) Parking Lots and Gates:

Trail users have found their way blocked by people parking in front of gates. Other than specified parking lots at Memorial Park, the Blue Line and Prospect Drive, there is no designated parking at Lynn Valley Trail entrances. People who park in front of gates are creating a hazard as they are blocking needed access for emergency vehicles and maintenance crews and also for trail users, particularly cyclists.

### c) Plants on the Trail Verge:

Trail users have reported very tall plants growing on the edge of the trail. These have been positively identified as Angelica, by Adam Biddle, Norfolk County Supervisor of Forestry. Several trail users have expressed concern that the plants are either Giant Hogweed or Cow Parsnip, both are invasive and poisonous, with Giant Hogweed having very serious effects on people. These plants should be avoided and not touched or examined by trail users. Angelica is not as troublesome, but should also be given a wide berth. It is difficult to distinguish one plant from the other and an expert's judgment should be relied upon.

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**d) Illegal Dumping on the Trail:** At some time, someone cut up several skids and decided to toss them over the fence at the Blueline Parking Lot. A volunteer, in our new Kilometers for Community program, scouted the area and moved the material for pick up by Norfolk County staff. Illegal dumping has been experienced more often since the closure of Norfolk County waste disposal yards.

**e) Dog Waste:** A perennial problem on the Trail is the responsible disposal of dog waste. Most dog owners, but certainly not all, take seriously their responsibility and the County By-law to pick up and dispose of their dogs waste in a trash can. There are many trash cans on the Lynn Valley Trail. Tossing plastic bags of waste into the bush is not acceptable.

**f) Fallen Trees:** With recent rain and wind storms, trees have come down close to or over the Trail and its four bridges. Trail users are often the first to report these dead falls to us or the County. We appreciate this. Our collaborative and legal agreement with the County is that Forestry staff will manage any fallen or standing material that we can not manage with a pruning lopper. Recent repairs to the Rotary Bridge railing were completed by our new Maintenance Co-ordinator, Dane Cosley, while volunteer Marvin cut up and removed the large tree trunks.

**g) Ticks:** People will have seen signage regarding the presence of Ticks in the area. Over the years, we have worked closely with the Haldimand Norfolk Health Unit and Norfolk County to increase awareness of the dangers of black legged or Deer Ticks and Lyme Disease. Taking precautions to avoid exposure to tick bites and or to take remedial action is a necessity when using the trails. The County is maintaining a scheduled cutting of the grass and growth on the verge or sides of the trails.

**h) Motorized Vehicles Prohibited:** Motorized vehicles are prohibited from trails in the County. One cyclist reported being confronted by a motorcyclist on the Waterford Heritage Trail. Other trail users have advised individuals about to enter a trail with a motorized vehicle that these are prohibited as noted by signs at each entrance. The development of a policy regarding ebikes is on the books for future.

**i) Hazards on the Trail:** Natural hazards and risks are a part of the experience involved in using a trail. The objective of the LVTA is to minimize the risks involved in the use of our recreational trail. Given this type of natural recreational trail, risks are at a very low level. At the same time, as noted in many of the examples above, there are possible risks that people should be aware of and avoid by: being prepared, aware and take reasonable responsibility for their own actions. Respecting the need and experiences of others, particularly during this time of Covid-19 pandemic response, is an important factor to consider.

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j) Kudos and Membership: On the brighter side of things, the Lynn Valley Trail Association is seeing a modest increase in membership. Along with this, we are also seeing a number of increased donations being made. These help in the ongoing maintenance and management of the trail. Perhaps a number of trail users recognize the advantage of having a high quality, physical experience outside in nature when other choices have been limited. We appreciate the many thank yous and financial contributions made for the Lynn Valley Trail. The LVTA Board of Directors have met twice using Zoom technology, and committees have also met virtually to maintain momentum on projects over the last several months.

In closing, with regard to the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, we must acknowledge that the risk of spread of the virus still exists. We are not out of the woods yet! At the same time, while on the trails by taking responsibility for our actions, being respectful of others and following the advice of the best scientific, medical and public health experts we will reduce the risk to ourselves and others in our community and families. The Lynn Valley Trail and all other trails in Norfolk County are a great natural resource to enjoy and protect.



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