

## THE BLUFF WILDERNESS HIKING TRAIL

The Bluff Trail is a 32k trail containing four stacked loops. It was constructed by the Woodens River Watershed Environmental Organization (WRWEO) and completed in 2005. It is located in the Five Bridges Lakes Wilderness Area. This area was declared a protected area in October 2011.

The Five Bridge Lakes Wilderness Area is home to a group of endangered mainland moose (part of Nova Scotia's only native moose population), as well as black bears, eastern coyotes, and many other animals. The Bluff Wilderness Hiking trail goes through ecologically sensitive barrens and is home to a large variety of flora including Broom Crowberry and Rare Mountain Sandwort.

The survival of the flora and fauna in this protected wilderness area depends on visitors becoming familiar with principles and skilled in the practices of **Leave No Trace** (LNT) hiking.

## LEAVE NO TRACE (LNT) PRINCIPLES

- **Follow official trails.** Travel single file in the centre of the trail, even through wet and muddy areas. Use only Approved LNT Educational Sites for camping.
- **Pack out all food** (including peels and shells) and litter including toilet paper. Do NOT burn food scraps or garbage.
- **Bury human and dog waste** at least 60m off trail and away from water or pack it out.
- **Leave rocks, plants, trees, and other natural objects as you find them.** Do not build an Inukshuk, furniture, cairns, or fire rings. Do not cut trees or pick flowers.
- **Use ONLY LNT fire bowls & camp stoves.** Campfires are prohibited. Use ONLY fallen dead wood for LNT fire bowl fuel.
- **Observe wildlife from a distance.** Do not follow, approach, or feed animals. Feeding may cause aggressive behaviour.
- **Note that dogs should be leashed**
- Be courteous to others. Enjoy the sounds of nature.

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## TRAIL INSPECTIONS

### WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Litter/Garbage ∞ Camp Fires ∞ Tree Cutting or Limbing  
∞ Problems with Boardwalks ∞ Problems with Signage ∞  
Problems with Way Markers ∞ Slope Erosion ∞ [Trail Braiding](#) ∞ [Trail Widening](#) ∞ [Trail Spurs](#) ∞ Deadfall & Windfall Blocking Trail ∞ Hazardous Brook or Stream Crossings ∞ Hazardous Conditions on Trail Surface ∞ Wet Areas in Need of Trail Hardening ∞ Evidence of OHV or bicycle Use ∞ Edge Brushing & Low Branches

### WHAT TO DO REMIEDIATE ∞ RECORD ∞ REPORT

Collect garbage and litter. If items are too large to pack out, record location and description of size and weight so others can find and collect them. Cache rocks from a campfire or inuksuk in the bush near trail to be used for trail hardening; dismantle log furniture by cutting and hiding logs as far from site as possible. Remediate duff layer on top of damaged or disturbed soil by spreading leaves and twigs to cover the area. Remediate spurs by placing deadfall, windfall, or rocks across the opening and report need for "Stay On Trail" sign at the location.

Record location of all remediation work, Include the date, length of time, and number of people who helped with trail work. If possible, submit 'before' and 'after' photos.

Make and record these observations (# of people, # of dogs - on / off leash, remediation and repair needed - board walks / erosion., wildlife observations, garbage removed, campfires noted/remediated, campsites not at LNT location). Please provide link to pictures. Complete the online trail report:  
<https://wrweo.ca/wp/the-bluff-trail/the-bluff-trail-steward-dship-program/submit-trail-report-online/>

◆ **You can also send** records, reports, photos, etc. to [info@wrweo.ca](mailto:info@wrweo.ca)

## ENGAGE TRAIL USERS

Remind trail users that The Bluff Trail is located within a **Protected Wilderness Area** and is governed by the *Wilderness Protection Act*. Except in certain circumstances, the *Act* prohibits:

Littering ∞ Campfires ∞ Developing Campsites  
Tree Cutting ∞ Damaging or Removing any Plants  
Unauthorized Motor Vehicles

### Campfires

**Problem:** Campfires are prohibited under the *Act*; they damage vegetation, soil layers, and tree canopy; The Bluff area is particularly vulnerable to forest fires.

**Solution:** use camp stoves or user-supplied LNT fire bowls or pans.

### Off-Leash Dogs

**Problem:** The Bluff Trail is not a designated off-leash area and is governed by the *Wildlife Act*; dogs can harm vulnerable flora and fauna species; dogs can be injured by porcupine, coyote, and other species in the area.

**Solution:** For off leash recreation use designated off-leash park areas: Sandy Lake Park (Bedford); Hemlock Ravine Park; Fort Needham Memorial Park; Point Pleasant Park; Shubie Park; and, Dartmouth Common.

### Trail Widening, Spurs, & Braiding

**Problem:** Think of the trail as a wound which threatens the survival of the local flora and fauna. A number of species in the area are already at risk. The wider the trail - the larger the wound and the greater the threat.

**Solution:** Always travel single file in the centre of the trail, even through wet and muddy areas. Do not create spurs, widening, or braiding & remediate as quickly as possible.

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Five Bridge Lakes Wilderness Area



The Woodens River Watershed Environmental Organization (WRWEO) has teamed up with the St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association (SMBSA) to create The Bluff Trail Stewardship Program (BTSP).

The purpose of the BTSP is to reduce the harmful human impacts currently affecting the trail and threatening the sustainability of the Five Bridge Lakes Wilderness Area.

At the core of the BTSP are volunteers who have become Bluff Trail Stewards and use their time on the trail to observe and record the conditions, remediate human harms, assist other visitors, and share information about how we can reduce the harmful human impacts on the trail and the surrounding ecosystems.

Each month, WRWEO hosts a Stewardship Day. Anyone wishing to become a volunteer steward is welcome to participate in stewardship training. During the course of the day volunteers split into two groups;. One group consists of new volunteers who receive the training necessary to become official Bluff Trail Stewards. The other group consists of trained stewards who work on the trail maintenance and remediation.

If you are interested in attending one of our stewardship days, or in learning more about the BTSP, please contact [info@wrweo.ca](mailto:info@wrweo.ca). Remember to book your spot on the next stewardship day, space is limited!

The BTSP is made possible through support from NSE – Protected Areas and Ecosystems Branch, the Five Bridges Wilderness Heritage Trust's Environmental Stewardship Grants Program, the RBC Community Action Grant, and through donations from trail users. Donations can be made by a cheque written to: **St.**

**Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association** and mailed to WRWEO 3650 Hammonds Plains Road, Suite 14, Unit 300, Upper Tantallon, Nova Scotia B3Z 4R3 or online through the Canada Helps portal on the **Heart of the Bay** website (<http://www.heartofthebay.ca/donate>) – select: Bluff Wilderness Trail as the fund you wish to