

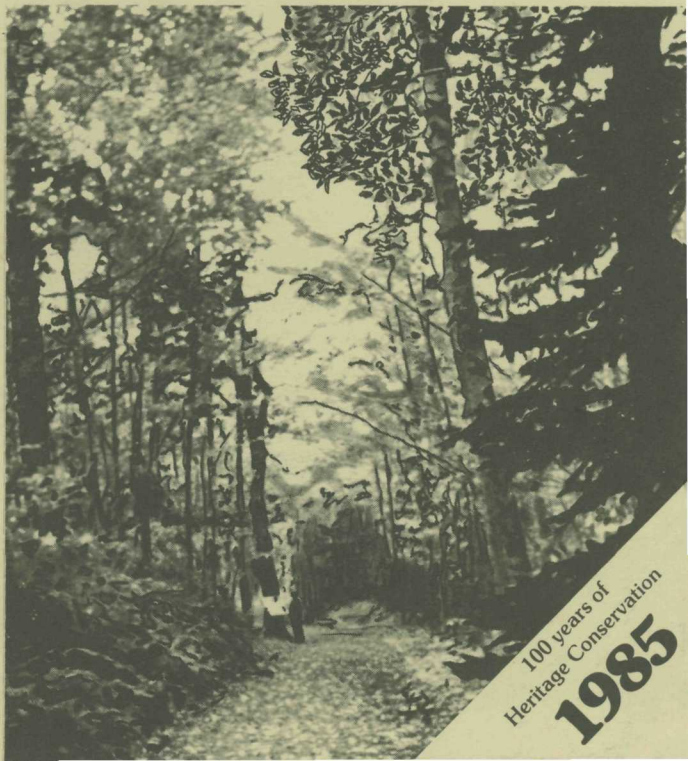


Parks
Canada

Parcs
Canada

Walking in the Highlands

A guide to the trails of
Cape Breton Highlands National Park



100 years of
Heritage Conservation

1985

WALKING IN THE HIGHLANDS

An Invitation . . .

Hiking in Cape Breton Highlands National Park — the chance to intimately explore the complex environment of northern Cape Breton Island.

We have twenty-eight different trails ranging from short, 20 minute family strolls to challenging overnight adventures. Most are level, however a few climb the mountains, threading the crests that motorists see from the lookoffs below. Some hug the rocky shoreline letting you smell and touch the sea, while others explore the mystery of our rich river valleys. Whatever your interest and physical ability you will find a trail to suit your tastes.

Weather, Equipment and the Bugs

July, August and September are the best months for hiking. In May and early June, highland trails can still have up to one metre of snow.

After a rainfall there may be wet or boggy sections on some of the trails. You should choose your footwear accordingly. When hiking on the plateau (Lac 3, Fishing Cove Lake 8, Lobster Lake 15 and Lake of Islands 22) and a few of the lowland trails, (Fishing Cove 11, Still Brook to Neil's Harbour 16 and Franey 23), we recommend comfortable, water-proof hiking boots. For the other trails, all you need is a good pair of walking shoes or sneakers.

Hikers on the plateau or along the coast should come prepared for weather changes. A small knapsack packed with raingear, a light sweater and a little food is essential.

Don't forget to bring your insect repellent; blackflies and mosquitoes are common all summer. September's cooler weather limits the activity of these pesky insects, yet still allows hikers to pleasantly explore our hardwood river valleys.

Choosing your trail

The trail descriptions give details on length, hiking time, conditions and special features found on each trail. TO FIND THE LOCATION OF A TRAIL, NOTE ITS NUMBER. THEN LOOK FOR THAT NUMBER ON THE MAP IN THE MAIN PARK BROCHURE.

Looking for a short trail?

Visitors interested in short, easy walks can choose from: La Prairie **4**, Bog **9**, Lone Shieling **13** and Green Cove **19** trails. Black Rock **26** and the Freshwater Lake Lookout **27** are short but steep in places.

Hoping to take some pictures?

A camera and a pair of binoculars can add considerable enjoyment to any hike. Although all trails offer interesting photographic subjects, here are some of our favorites:

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 L'Acadien | 16 Still Brook to |
| 6 Corney Brook | Neil's Harbour |
| 7 Skyline | 23 Franey |
| 12 MacIntosh Brook | 24 Clyburn Valley |
| 13 Lone Shieling | 25 Middle Head |
| | 27 Freshwater Lake Lookout |

Want to go fishing?

Eastern brook trout live in most of the park's rivers and ponds. Fishermen have found that La Prairie **4**, Fishing Cove Lake **8**, Benjie's Lake **10**, Jigging Cove Lake **18**, Warren Lake **21** and the Clyburn Brook **24** offer the best results. The special challenge of Atlantic salmon fly fishing awaits in the Chéticamp River. Remember though, you need a national park fishing permit to fish in park waters.

Backpacking

Backpacking trips are possible on the Fishing Cove **11**, John D Lake **15** and Lake of Islands **22** trails. Backpackers require a backcountry use permit available free at the information centers or from park wardens. This permit must be turned in at the end of your trip.

Selected readings

The Hiking Trails of Cape Breton Highlands National Park (1982), published by Les Amis du Plein Air de Chéticamp, contains a more detailed review of park trails, including information on vegetation and wildlife. Detailed maps showing the route of each trail are also provided.

Trail Description

All trail lengths and hiking times are in round trip figures.

- | | |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| 1 L'Acadien | Length: 9.6 km |
| | Hiking Time: 3½ - 4 hours |

The top of Burnt Mountain towers 365 metres over the Chéticamp River valley. Don't let this height bother you, the heavy breathing is well worth it! The panoramic views of

the Acadian coast, from which this trail inherited its name, are unforgettable. The lookouts at the top offer ideal spots for a picnic and are usually bug free!

2 Trous de Saumons Length: 13 km
Hiking Time: 4 - 4½ hrs

Known as Salmon Pools, Trous de Saumons will interest more than fishermen. The trail starts at the far end of Chéticamp Campground as an old fire access road. Ideal for family outings, the walk is level, easy and usually dry to the first pool; 3.6 km up the river valley. There the trail narrows and continues to the Chance Pool, where the river has polished the exposed bedrock, creating an ideal location for a picnic. Just a little farther on, the "3rd pool" marks the end of this trail.

3 Lac Length: 16 km
Hiking Time: 4 - 5 hrs

Rising steeply, 435 metres in the first 5½ km, this trail requires that you be in good shape. Starting at the far end of Chéticamp Campground you will pass through three major vegetation patterns found in the park: Acadian forest, boreal forest and the plateau barrens. Some hikers end their walk at the small plateau lake while others continue for another 5 km to a small cabin that marks the end of the trail.

4 La Prairie Length: 1.2 km
Hiking Time: ½ hr

The Acadians call it La Prairie "the meadow that borders the river, as it reaches to the sea". Built from silt and gravel carried downstream by the river, this area close to the mouth of the Chéticamp River teems with life, especially flies.

The short riverside trail, located opposite the Chéticamp Campground's outdoor theatre, can be very pleasant during

the latter part of the day. Then, the rays of sun filtering through the beech and maple grove form amazing light patterns on the lush fern undergrowth.

5 Le Buttereau Length: 1.9 km
Hiking Time: 40 - 50 mins

Wildflowers and history — do these subjects interest you? If so, you will find exploring Le Buttereau fascinating. This short trail meanders where pioneer Acadians first tilled the soil, many years ago. An interpretive brochure, available at the trail head, helps you to understand their story. Wildflowers and many other trees and shrubs have invaded the old pastures left behind.

6 Corney Brook Length: 8 km
Hiking Time: 2 - 2½ hrs

For a relaxing stroll, try Corney Brook. Following the meandering brook it's named after, the trail ends at a small waterfall that's especially picturesque after a rainstorm. Be on the watch for wildlife — you may see a variety of birds and occasionally white-tailed deer and snowshoe hare along this trail.

7 Skyline Length: 7 km
Hiking Time: 1½ - 2 hrs

Imagine peering down on the Cabot Trail. The vehicles below, slowly moving along French Mountain, look like children's toys. Turn west and you're facing the Gulf of St. Lawrence! Directly below, a fisherman is hauling his net. You may even see whales!

8 Fishing Cove Lake Length: 11 km
Hiking Time: 2½ - 3 hrs

Fishermen usually have success in the small lake at the end of this trail. Although the fishing is good, the walking isn't.

The trail travels through large, boggy areas. As you cross these bogs, keep a watchful eye out for moose.

9 Bog Length: 609 metres
Hiking Time: 20 - 30 mins

Bogs can be interesting! Pitcher plants, sundews and salamanders are just some of the many plants and animals that live there. Explore this short boardwalk trail. You'll be surprised at what you can discover without getting wet!

10 Benjies Lake Length: 3.2 km
Hiking Time: 1 - 1½ hrs

Situated on top of the plateau, Benjies Lake, like Fishing Cove Lake, offers good opportunities for fishermen, especially in early spring. On the way to the lake you'll discover a bit of the plateau, as the trail crosses wet barrens and ever-green forests typical of the highlands.

11 Fishing Cove Length: 16 km
Hiking Time: 4 - 5 hrs

Imagine going to sleep to the sound of the surf outside your tent. You can enjoy this experience at Fishing Cove, the site of an old fishing community and now one of the park's three designated wilderness campgrounds. The hike down to the cove offers varied sounds and sights as the trail closely hugs the edge of the rugged Fishing Cove River. Once at the cove, explore the beach, roam the hills or swim in either fresh or salt water.

12 MacIntosh Brook Length: 2.8 km
Hiking Time: 40 - 50 mins

This short dry trail starts at the far end of MacIntosh Brook Campground and allows you to explore life in a sugar maple forest. Listen for the sound of the birds, the gurgling of

MacIntosh Brook and the rustle of the leaves beneath your feet. Be sure to take your camera, picture taking opportunities abound.

13 Lone Shieling Length: 0.8 km
Hiking Time: 15 - 20 mins

Here, you will find 300 year old sugar maple trees surrounding a replica of a Scottish sheep crofter's hut. What is a Scottish sheep crofters' hut doing in northern Cape Breton, and how large are 300 year old sugar maple trees? Discover the answers to these and other questions on this short, dry trail. You won't be disappointed!

14 Aspy Length: 9.6 km
Hiking Time: 2 - 3 hrs

Picnic at Beulach Ban Falls, then stroll along this fire access trail through an impressive forest of maple, birch and oak. Below, sea trout and salmon lurk in the dark pools of the North Aspy, above towers North Mountain and the plateau. This trail follows along the side of the Aspy Valley for 2.4 km and then narrows into a footpath to the highland barrens. Hikers may find the climb difficult but the scenic glimpses of the valley, North Mountain and the plateau make it worthwhile.

**15 John D and
Lobster Lakes** Length: 18 km
Hiking Time: 6 - 7 hrs

Seeking solitude? Want to get away from it all? Then this is the trail for you.

From the parking lot at Paquette Lake you follow an old fire access trail across barrens, over hills and through softwood stands as far as Glasgow Lake. There the trail narrows to a footpath and leads to the top of Glasgow Lake Hill where you can see for miles. Continue on: John D Lake is next with

its small but inviting sandy beach and large population of pan-sized brook trout — an ideal spot to set up camp. For those who wish to hike farther, Lobster Lake, 1.5 km away, also offers freshwater fishing.

**16 Still Brook to
Neil's Harbour**

Length: 11 km
Hiking Time: 3 - 4 hrs

Seashores are exciting! Each cove, beach and headland offers the possibility of new discoveries.

This trail hugs the shoreline. Here, you can feel the salt spray and listen to the sounds of the waves crashing against the hard granite headlands. Whales surfacing, fish schooling and gulls soaring — parts of the marine environment alert hikers can experience along this section of rugged coast.

17 Jack Pine

Length: 2.8 km
Hiking Time: 1 hour

Along this loop trail you will discover trees that grow in the cracks of rocks and need a forest fire to open their cones. Life sounds tough, yet the Jack Pine continues to survive. The trail threads through several stands of spruce, fir and pine, ultimately reaching the coast and the Still Brook to Neil's Harbour trail 16, your route back.

18 Jigging Cove Lake

Length: 4.8 km
Hiking Time: 1 - 1½ hrs

Jigging Cove Lake — small, shallow, but highly productive — attracts many types of visitors. Fishermen come to test their skill against the elusive brook trout, while birders and others simply enjoy the varied wildlife the short relaxing trail around the lake reveals.

19 Green Cove

Length: 366 metres
Hiking Time: 15 - 20 mins

An ideal short stroll, Green Cove trail meanders over a rocky headland jutting into the sea. There, you can feel the steady throb of the ocean and learn to appreciate its strength. The action of the waves during violent storms keep the rocks exposed. Look closely and examine geological history at your feet!

20 Broad Cove Mountain

Length: 3.2 km
Hiking Time: ½ - 2 hrs

Up, up and away! This short switchbacked trail takes you to the top of Broad Cove Mountain where you get an eagle's view of Warren Lake, Broad Cove Campground, Middle Head and Cape Smokey. You, in turn, may be watched! Bald Eagles frequently soar over Warren Lake.

21 Warren Lake

Length: 8.5 km
Hiking Time: 2½ - 3 hrs

For a relaxing walk, this level trail is hard to beat. Starting either at the Warren Lake picnic area or the entrance to Broad Cove Campground, the trail hugs the shoreline of Warren Lake and is alive with wildlife. Birds of all sorts and sizes flit through the trees and ragged branches show evidence of moose and deer browse. Quiet, alert hikers may even catch a glimpse of one of these elusive animals.

22 Lake of Islands

Length: 25.8 km
Hiking Time: 7 - 8 hrs

This fire access trail threads around several bogs and across large barrens, finally ending at a primitive campsite located on the shore of Lake of Islands, in the midst of the plateau. The hiking is in keeping with the countryside — harsh,

difficult and challenging. The trail is usually wet, the ground rocky and the weather changeable. A rewarding wilderness experience awaits those ready to accept this challenge.

23 Franey

Length: 6.4 km
Hiking Time: 2½ - 3 hrs

Hiking Franey trail will require a bit of energy! You climb 366 m in just over 3 km, but the views from the top are well worth it — the open sea, Middle Head and Cape Smokey to the east, Money Point to the north, the sheer face of Franey Mountain to the south, and 427 m below, the Clyburn Valley.

One suggestion, do the hike in a loop. Leave your car at the trail head parking lot and follow the fire access road to the top of the mountain. To return, follow the hiking trail down.

24 Clyburn Valley

Length: 9.2 km
Hiking Time: 2 - 3 hrs

Gold! This trail offers a variety of features to explore, including the ruins of an old gold mine. Hikers will also marvel at spectacular stands of hardwood trees, boulders bigger than many cars, and old abandoned beaver ponds. Ideal for family outings, this trail offers level, easy and usually dry walking as it winds through the rich Clyburn River Valley.

25 Middle Head

Length: 4 km
Hiking Time: 1½ - 2 hrs

This trail reaches to the tip of the Middle Head peninsula. Appropriately named, the peninsula separates Ingonish Bay into two almost equal halves, North and South Bay. The trail provides a refreshing walk offering hikers views of both bays, Cape Smokey and Tern Rock — a sea stack where common and arctic terns nest during June and July. Don't forget your camera, picture-taking opportunities abound!

26 Black Rock Lookout

Length: 305 m
Hiking Time: 10 - 15 mins

For a close-up view of a sea stack in the making try this trail. What's a sea stack? It's a column of rock once joined to the mainland by softer rock that has been eroded away by the sea, leaving the column as a small island.

27 Freshwater Lake Lookout

Length: 366 m
Hiking Time: 15 - 20 mins

Whether you're just starting or ending your visit to Cape Breton Highlands National Park, the view from the top of this short but steep trail provides a warm welcome or a fond farewell. Don't forget to take your camera — the community of Ingonish Beach, the park's administration area, Freshwater Lake, Middle Head and Cape Smokey all form part of the picturesque vista that unfolds below you.

28 Freshwater Lake

Length: 2 km
Hiking Time: 30 mins

Finish off your swim or picnic at Freshwater Lake with a relaxing stroll along this short, level, dry trail. If you're lucky, you might even be able to watch a beaver or muskrat swimming in the lake. The trail starts next to the lake's beach and hugs the shoreline until it reaches a portion of the Old Cabot Trail. There, turn right and you will return to the parking lot.

Additional Information

Information centres at the Cheticamp and Ingonish entrances to the park are open from mid-May to mid-October and our staff there would be pleased to answer any of your questions.

To purchase the book Hiking Trails of **Cape Breton Highlands National Park** please write to Les Amis du Plein Air de Chéticamp, P.O. Box 472, Chéticamp, N.S. B0E 1H0.

Park Address: Superintendent, Cape Breton Highlands National Park, Ingonish Beach, Nova Scotia, B0C 1L0.

Notes:

Notes:

Published by authority of
the Minister of the Environment
© Minister of Supply and
Services Canada 1984

QS T243 000 EE A2

Canada