

# The Trans Canada Trail

By *Arlene Davidson*

Border2Beaches (B2B) is a section of the Trans Canada Trail (TCT) that runs 370 kilometres from the Ontario border to the beaches of Lake Winnipeg.

It is a linear trail that connects the TCT east from Ontario through the Lac du Bonnet Region of Manitoba. This portion of the national trail traverses the region through the communities of Lac du Bonnet, Pinawa and Seven Sisters Falls.

B2B is the main non-motorized vehicle trail in the region, ideal for hiking, walking, running, cycling, cross country skiing, horseback riding, cross country skiing and snowshoeing.

On Sept. 27, 2013, Trails Manitoba celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Trans Canada Trail with the official opening of Pinawa's portion of the Border2Beaches Trail.

A ceremony was held on the Manitoba Hydro Dam after a group of dignitaries walked the 15 kilometre trail from Pinawa to the Seven Sisters Falls Generating Station. Noted members of this group included Laureen Harper, Honorary Campaign Chair of the Trans Canada Trail, and Deborah Apps, President and CEO of the Trans Canada Trail.

"The [B2B] Trail is now approximately one-third complete. All trails encourage exploration and this one provides unprecedented access to Manitoba's beautiful wilderness as well as its parks, towns and natural wonders," said Ian Hughes, president of Trails Manitoba.

A newly designed logo for the B2B trail was unveiled by Hughes, followed by a ribbon cutting ceremony on the Seven Sisters Falls Dam. The sound of rushing water, the blend of rocks and river, and the colour of sky and changing leaves, provided a perfect backdrop for the trails celebration.

"There are beautiful Trans Canada trails throughout Manitoba, but the Border2Beaches is Manitoba's signature trail," said Donna Wärenko, marketing chair of Trails Manitoba. "It encompasses a cross section of everything Manitoba has to offer: the lakes, rivers, granite outcrops, wildlife, heritage and scenery abound along the route."

The Lac du Bonnet Trails Association welcomes the public to experience the newly renovated trails located around Blueberry Rock, an extraordinarily beautiful jewel of wilderness.

The Blueberry Rock Hiking Trails are located east from Lac du Bonnet off PR 313, and one kilometre north on Blueberry Rock Drive. The newly erected trailhead sign and parking lot are visible from the road.

In addition to a sign, recent renovations include signage on the highway and the trail, and repairs and upgrades to picnic tables and the lookout tower.

The Lac du Bonnet Trails Association selected and installed six Bronfman panels that inform the public of the richness and diversity specific to the Blueberry Rock. These interpretive panels provide vivid pictures and explanatory notes about indigenous plants, animals, ecosystems, weather and geographic features. The selections for Blueberry Rock include the blueberry, black bear, red fox, raccoon and the blue flag flower, which is a member of the iris family.

Pinawa's section of the Trans Canada Trail traverses 28 kilometres of mixed forest, granite ridges, and beaver dams as

it winds from the Pinawa Dam Provincial Park to the Seven Sisters Generating Station. This section of the trail includes the Pinawa Channel Heritage Walk, Ironwood Trail and the Alice Chambers Trail.

Thousands of visitors experience the beauty, diversity of wildlife, and the exhilaration of just being outdoors in what seems to be an untouched area.

The Pinawa Channel Heritage Walk is a challenging trail, spectacular in its beauty, with dense forests and rocky landscapes typical of the Canadian Shield in contrast to The Alice Chambers Trail north of Pinawa, which offers a well-worn track through a fairly level terrain, making an easy hike or bike for all ages and abilities.

The beauty of the Pinawa trail lies in the opportunity to see wildlife such as bear, deer, marten and perhaps a fox. Many fruit bearing trees can be admired in the fall, and the diverse migratory and resident birds makes the trail a destination for birders.

An industrious national goal is to have the Trans Canada Trail complete from coast to coast on July 1, 2017 in celebration of the 25th anniversary of the trail, and in time for Canada's 150th birthday. This will be an extra special celebration for the Lac du Bonnet Trails Association, as the RM of Lac du Bonnet will also be celebrating its centennial year.



Photo by Donna Wärenko