

Our WALKING TRAILS in Creston

ILC – April 2021 FINAL

Spring is officially here and with it, the promise of fresh beginnings and the freedom to enjoy walking and exploring the outdoors. This year, I am even more appreciative of the natural beauty that surrounds us and the opportunity to discover new and familiar places within the Town of Creston and our Creston Valley!

A long time ago, I used to enjoy jogging on Highway #3A from my home to Sanca Creek, but that ceased when my work schedule changed and my age caught up to me. Now, as you may know, I am an avid curler and golfer. When I am able to golf, I generally use a power cart as over the years, walking the uneven terrain causes my left ankle to become inflamed and I probably have some arthritis setting in as well. Oh, the joys of getting older!

These activities have been my primary form of exercise and usually, there is a seamless transition between golfing and curling. However, this past winter things were different as the group sport of curling was not permitted under the Provincial Health Orders; challenging me to find another way to be active. So, I decided to take up casual walking. In 2021, I have been walking about 7 miles a day either on my treadmill at home or on the days when I am in my office at Town Hall, taking a walk around Town and rediscovering our local neighbourhoods and trails. On a leisurely walk for an hour, one can cover a fairly large area in Creston. Several great routes that start in the downtown core include the Rotary Millennium-Centennial loop, the Library loop, the Rotary Klaus loop, Steve's Ride trail and Railway Blvd. I also enjoy walking to the Creston &

District Community Complex and visiting the Skate Park and viewing our community from 20th Ave. North then continuing onto Hillside, Hurl or Alder Streets. These walks have helped me to realize just a few of the many places that we have access to in the Town of Creston.

We also have a number of walking trails within Creston. Right now, one can walk on the Rotary Devon trail at the north end of 16th Ave., down and past Schikurski Park onto Devon Street then the Glaser Trail to Payne Street. One of our future plans would be to connect a trail all the way to Helen Street which would be about a block from Tim Horton's. In time, these trails could fully paved and maintained by the Town of Creston.

One of the more positive outcomes of the pandemic has been the recognition from the provincial and federal governments that people need more ways and more spaces to enjoy the outdoors. There have been a number of grant opportunities for local governments to apply for that would assist in creating or transforming local public spaces in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as developing trails that are accessible year round. Just last month, I received an email from a citizen asking if the Town of Creston would be applying for a federal funding opportunity that has a total of \$31 million to allocate. The minimum funding for successful projects would be \$5,000 and the maximum would be \$250,000 for each project, and there are two intakes – March and May 2021. Our Town staff did submit an application to improve and augment our current walking trail network by extending and widening certain trails. Fingers crossed that we will be successful in our application!

Our Creston Valley has hiking trails galore, for all skill levels. Easier trails include Corn Creek Giant Cedar, Ka Papa Cedars and trails at the Creston

Valley Wildlife Management Area. Moderate trails include Balancing Rock, Summit Creek, Mount Thompson Rotary, Ripple Ridge, Mount Thompson Rim and Ladyslipper trails. If you are up for a challenge, there are the Billy Goat Bluffs, Corn Creek Falls and Haystack Mountain trails – just to name a few! The Trails for Creston Valley Society has an excellent trail map detailing the difficulty level, length, elevation data and approximate completion time for numerous trails in the Creston Valley, including those that I have mentioned here. Check it out on their website – crestonvalleytrails.ca/trails.

I think that we can all agree that this past year has been challenging for everyone. I encourage you to keep active by taking advantage of our community trails, especially with warmer weather on the horizon. Have fun and enjoy the beauty of this wonderful place that we call home!

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