

Fun In The Sun!

By: Jennifer McCourt, Executive Director, Discovery Routes Trails Organization

It takes only a few steps along the new Whitestone Lake Recreational Trail to come to understand that it is not the destination, but journey that matters. The peace and solitude of the forest immediately takes hold as you walk amongst the mature trees and follow the marked path through the wilderness around Whitestone Lake. The Municipality of Whitestone is dominated by large tracts of Crown land but up until now there were no marked trails for hikers to feel reasonably assured of finding their way back out of the wild. The Whitestone Lake Recreational Trail is one of two new trails now ready for exploration thanks to the persistent efforts of the Municipality of Whitestone's Community Development Committee.



The **Whitestone Lake Recreational Trail** is located at the northwest end of Whitestone Lake and can be accessed from Whitestone Lake Resort a few kilometres outside of the town of Dunchurch. The 3.5 km looped trail is rugged in sections as it settles into its new use and requires sturdy footwear, flip flops not recommended. A steep climb takes hikers to the top of a ridge that overlooks Whitestone Lake. The view isn't great as it is filtered by the tall trees that line the ridge, but the open granite at the top makes a nice spot to stop for a snack - unless you are visiting the trail in blackfly season, at which time the advice is: **KEEP MOVING!** Hikers are reminded to stay on the marked trail and be mindful of private property that lies adjacent to some parts

of the trail.

The second addition to the area's expanding trails network is the **Nesbitt Trail**. The Nesbitt Trail is located just west of the town of Ardbeg off Clear Lake Road. Although geographically close to the Whitestone Lake Trail, the ecology is markedly different. This linear trail is 2.5 km one-way and traverses a much rockier terrain. Recent forestry operations have altered the landscape to the north of the trail and are a good reminder that the forest is a shared resource that benefits the region in many ways. The trail is named in memory of Ricky Nesbitt who was a life-long resident of Ardbeg.



Planning is underway by the Municipality of Whitestone to celebrate the Official Opening of these two trails with ribbon cutting events in June.

Trail maps, trailhead directions and further details are available from Discovery Routes Trails Organization and can be accessed online at www.discoveryroutes.ca. Discovery Routes is a not-for-profit organization that works with local volunteers to assist with trail projects and build awareness of the diverse trail systems in the communities of the Near North.