

Animating the John Rowswell Hub Trail

Sault Naturalists Trail Walk



© NORDIK Institute, 2014



www.hubtrail.com



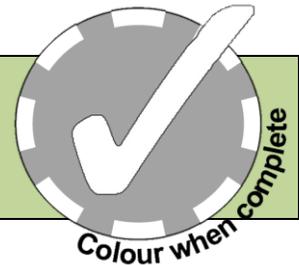
The Sault Naturalists

Founded in 1954, the [Sault Naturalists](#) is an international club with about 100 members from both Ontario and Michigan. They are affiliated with Ontario Nature, the Michigan Audubon Society, and Nature Canada. The Sault Naturalists provide members with common meeting ground for exchanging ideas and broadening knowledge and understanding of natural science; promote appreciation, preservation, and conservation of natural heritage; and support and cooperate with similar organizations. They hold regular meetings from September through June, and host outings, hikes, and excursions year-round.

This nature walk is created by the Sault Naturalists. Read the clues as you walk the Trail to find specific trees, shrubs, plants, and animals between Trail markers. Provided below are charts which includes lists of species you may find in the East Neighbourhood, Northern Corridor, Finn Hill, Fort Creek, and Carmen's Way Trail Sections. The charts include a column to record the date and season you found each species. Plants and trees are linked to the [Northern Ontario Plant Database](#) to help you identify them. This database provides high quality photos and a wealth of information regarding each species. Colour the checkmarks when you've found all the species for a Trail Section.

Happy hunting! How many can you find?

East Neighbourhood



Trail Marker 5 km (Chief Shingwauk)

Just past Anna McCrea School is a small wooded area where there are several plants you will also see in other Hub Trail sections. Red osier dogwood (you can tell by the red stems) and the Blue Chicory flower are easily found here. You will see several grasses like red-top (guess why is it named this?), Canada bluejoint and fireweed. Fireweed likes open areas and often grows first just after a forest fire. European honeysuckle and Canada thistle, originally from Europe, are also present. Can you find the woolgrass sedge?

Species	Database	Date Found
<i>Red Osier Dogwood</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Blue Chicory</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Red-top Grass</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Canada Bluejoint Grass</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	

<i>Fireweed</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>European Honeysuckle</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Canada Thistle</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Woolgrass Sedge</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	

Trail Markers 6-7 km (Holy Cross School to Oil Tanks)

This is a short section of woodland which is in the process of succession as are all relatively young ecosystems. The forest is constantly changing with different plants displacing other plants in the competition for life. If you look around the Trail you will see silver maple, mountain ash with its orange berries, and many aspen trees. Aspen is a tree that grows quickly in an open area. Their presence here indicates that this area is at a young stage for a newly developing forest.

Species	Database	Date Found
<i>Silver Maple</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Mountain Ash</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Aspen</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	

Other trees beginning to grow are horse chestnut, mountain maple and Norway maple. You can probably see the black polka-dots on the leaves of the Norway maple. All maples are very susceptible to this tar spot disease which is a fungus and seems to be becoming more common in Ontario.

Species	Database	Date Found
<i>Horse Chestnut</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Mountain Maple</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Norway Maple</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	

As you move into this wooded area you will see much jewelweed with its orange flowers, especially by the tennis courts. These flowers are also called touch-me-nots. When the seed pods mature, if you touch them they will explode throwing the seeds into the air for dispersal. Why would a plant have this adaptation?

Look for virgin's bower around the tennis courts. It is a vine with sweet smelling white flowers which form hairy clusters when mature. Its fluffy white seed heads are visible even in winter.

Surrounding the playground is common elderberry. This small shrub will only reach about 2 meters in height. It has white flower clusters that produce dark purple berries. Have you ever tried elderberry jam? The flesh of the ripe berry is the only part of this plant not poisonous and is also eaten by birds.

Goldenrod, white avens and buttercup grow in abundance. You will also see a lot of chokecherry. This shrub can get up to 8 meters high and its red berries turn black when mature. Can you guess why it is called chokecherry? The fruit may be edible but it is very tart!

Spotted Joe-Pye weed can be found here with its showy head of purple flowers that stick up above the rest. It gets its name from a native healer called Joe Pye who used this group of plants to treat a variety of ailments. Can you guess why it is a SPOTTED Joe-Pye weed?

European fly honeysuckle which is an invasive plant can also be found along the Trail. It is a shrub which has red berries which can cause stomach upset. Honeysuckles from Europe and Asia are prized for their ornamentals flowers and have been deliberately planted in North American gardens. Unfortunately they haven't stayed in the gardens.

Species	Database	Date Found
<i>Spotted Jewelweed</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Virgin's Bower</i>	http://ontariowildflowers.com/	
<i>Common Elderberry</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Goldenrod</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>White Avens</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Buttercup</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Chokecherry</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Joe-Pye Weed</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>European Fly Honeysuckle</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	

Along this part of the Trail and in many open sections of the Trail you will see a tall grass growing with a spiked shape to the seed pods. This is the reed canarygrass and is very common along the Trail. Unfortunately, it is an [invasive species](#) and forms a monoculture squeezing

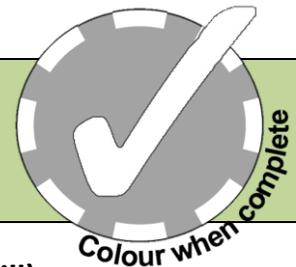
other species out of the area. Canarygrass spreads by aggressively sending out rhizomes in all directions to form new plants as well as scatter seeds.

Canada thistle, dwarf raspberry, curly dock, fringed sedge, Canada bluejoint, hempnettle, hazelnut, blackberry and hedge bindweed can also be seen growing along this section of the Trail.

Another non-native species is the bittersweet nightshade. The vine's berries are toxic and must be avoided; however the juices from the stem have been used to treat abrasions and inflammations of the skin.

Species	Database	Date Found
<i>Reed Canarygrass</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Canada Thistle</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Dwarf Raspberry</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Curly Dock</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Fringed Sedge</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Canada Bluejoint</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Hempnettle</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Hazelnut</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Blackberry</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Hedge Bindweed</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Bittersweet nightshade</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	

Finn Hill



Trail Markers 8- 10 km (Black Road and McNabb to the top of the hill)

This pleasant part of the Trail winds through a young mixed forest with many interesting wild flowers and trees. Small basswood trees are growing here far north of their normal range. You will see many shrubs such as the European honeysuckle with its red berries after the white flowers are gone. It is non-native. There are open areas which are filled with ferns such as New

York fern, ostrich fern and lady fern. The flowers that are present attract birds and insects to feed on the nectar. Several [invasive species](#) can be found here such as the yellow archangel.

Species	Database	Date Found
<i>Basswood</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>European Honeysuckle</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>New York Fern</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Ostrich Fern</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Lady Fern</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Yellow Archangel</i>	http://ontariowildflowers.com/	

A plant familiar to many of us is burdock, with Velcro-like seed pods that catch on the pant legs and the socks of passersby. This spreads their seeds wherever we finally rid ourselves of the pods. It is said that the maker of Velcro strips used the burdock as a template for the invention!

Other plants along the Trail are the wild blue phlox, prickly wild lettuce, fringed bindweed, hempenettle (with its unique arrangement of flowers at the axis of its leaves to its stem), purple-leaved willowherb, and mad-dog skullcap (apparently this plant was used as a remedy to treat rabies in the eighteenth century).

Raspberry plants grow along the path of which the berries are great to eat. Bottlebrush grass is aptly named because of its shape.

Fireweed with its large deep pink or purple flower is abundant along the Trail. It was named for the fact it likes open spaces which would exist after a fire. It is often the first plant to start up after a fire has gone through the forest.

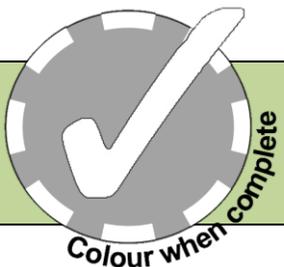
There is also red baneberry and wild basil (flowers pale pink to white in clusters at the tip of the plant as well at the axel of the upper most leaves).

Unfortunately, some ash trees are dying along the Trail because of the emerald ash borer.

Species	Database	Date Found
<i>Burdock</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Wild Blue Phlox</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Prickly Lettuce</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	

<i>Fringed Bindweed</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Hempnettle</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Purple-leaved willowherb</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Mad-Dog Skullcap</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Raspberries</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Bottlebrush grass</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Fireweed</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Red Baneberry</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Wild Basil</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Ash Tree</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	

Northern Corridor



Trail Marker 12-13 km (Crossroads to Sault Area Hospital)

The Hub Trail follows an access road to the hospital and on one side can be found many different plants. However many of the plants are invasive. Invasive means that the plants are not native to Canada or this area of Canada. When [invasive species](#) move in, other native plants cannot grow there. This results in less of our native species and more of the invasive ones. One example is spotted knapweed.

Cattails are present in the small wetland that is along the Trail. The cattails provide shelter and food for insects, such as dragonflies and birds including the Red-winged blackbird. The roots of the cattails trap pollutants in the water and help keep the water fresh for other living things along the path that the water flows. Indigenous people used the cattails for torches by soaking them in fat and setting them on fire. The roots were used for food and the stems used for weaving baskets.

There is lots of wool grass. You can easily identify wool grass by the texture of the seed pods of this sedge. Other grasses present are Canada blue joint (note the blue colour at the nodes of the stem), foxtail grass (seed pods look like foxtails), and Timothy grass. Timothy is the grass with the tight bundle of seeds and when you pull on the stem, it breaks easily and you can chew on the end for moistening your mouth.

Species	Database	Date Found
<i>Spotted Knapweed</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Cattails</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Woolgrass</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Canada Bluejoint</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Foxtail Grass</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Timothy Grass</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	

Also very aggressive are the staghorn sumac which has a unique flower but can easily dominate the landscape.

Thistles are abundant along the path, mostly Canada thistle which is [invasive](#).

The yellow button-shaped flower is the common tansy. It is an alien or foreign species but doing well in our area. You can tell the common tansy from the native Huron tansy by the tight flat top small button flower display of the common Tansy.

Along the path you can also see what we call “cavity trees”. These trees have holes in their trunk and are usually dead. The holes were created by woodpeckers looking for insects burrowing deep inside the wood of the trunk of the tree. In these holes you may find nests of smaller birds using these convenient holes for shelter.

Species	Database	Date Found
<i>Staghorn Sumac</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Canada Thistle</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Common Tansy</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Cavity Trees</i>	http://www.lrconline.com/Extension_Notes_English/pdf/cvtytrs.pdf	

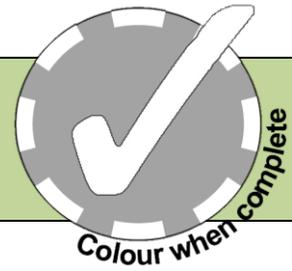
Trail Marker 14km (Home of Many)

Along Third Line Road next to the hospital were planted several swamp white oak. It is interesting to see how these trees survive in the open. Check the leaves to see the difference between this oak and the regular white oak. The acorns provide food of course, for squirrels and woodpeckers.

At the old part of the Davey Home you can see the silhouette of a large American elm spreading its huge branches to the sky.

Species	Database	Date Found
<i>Swamp White Oak</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>American Elm</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	

Fort Creek



Trail marker 17 km (Hilly Terrain)

In the open areas you may see many different kinds of ferns. Ferns were early plants in plant evolution which were much bigger during the dinosaur days. Now they are small but delicate plants that grow in the shade of the forests. A few, like the bracken fern, prefer open fields. See how many different ones you can identify. You should find sensitive fern, lady fern, and interrupted fern. Why do you think it's called "interrupted" fern? Look at the stem of the fern for a clue.

Also look for the false Solomon seal flower growing along the Trail.

Species	Database	Date Found
<i>Bracken Fern</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Sensitive Fern</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Lady Fern</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Interrupted Fern</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>False Solomon Seal</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	

You will see reed canarygrass which is an [invasive species](#) growing in bunches along the Trail. It is an aggressive grass which forms monocultures by sending out rhizomes from which new plants grow. Wild raisin and red elderberry bushes also grow along the Trail.

When crossing the bridges, look at the top of the trees underneath you...this is the only opportunity you can see them so close. You can tell the species of tree by its silhouette. See how many trees you can identify. If you look at the tops of the fir trees where the cones are and

compare them to the cones on the tops of the spruce trees, you will see that the bigger female cones point up in the fir trees. That is one way of telling the difference in the trees. However you have to be looking at the top of the tree to see this difference.

Species	Database	Date Found
<i>Reed Canarygrass</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Wild Raisin</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Red Elderberry</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Fir Tree</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Spruce Tree</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	

Look down at the meandering stream. It is the perfect habitat for amphibians, fish, and other aquatic creatures.

In the valleys that the bridges cross over you may catch a glimpse of a deer, moose, or fox. They like this area to get food to survive. With these bridges we can observe them at a safe distance and not disturb them as they go about their daily search for food.

Species	Database	Date Found
<i>White-tailed Deer</i>	http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/kids/animal-facts/animals.asp?region=ont	
<i>Red Fox</i>	http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/kids/animal-facts/animals.asp?region=ont	
<i>Moose</i>	http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/kids/animal-facts/animals.asp?region=ont	
<i>Trout Lily</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	

Also check out the two different birch trees. Note the difference between the yellow and the white birch, both big trees in this woodland.

Don't forget to sample some of the wild raspberries that grow along the Trail. Make sure not to eat anything that a grown-up has not checked over first. Wild raspberries look the same as the common garden variety and are easy to identify.

Species	Database	Date Found
<i>Yellow Birch</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>White Birch</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Wild Raspberries</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	

Trail marker 17-18 km (Hilly Terrain to Fort Creek Dam)

Look into the woods and see if you can find trees with holes in them. They are called cavity trees. The woodpeckers made these holes digging for insects deep within the trunks of these dead trees. These holes in the cavity trees are often used by other birds for nests and shelter. Can you see any nests?

As you amble along be alert for two interesting species of trees growing alongside the Trail – black locust and larch.

On the east side of the Trail, there are two large trees just a step or two from the Trail. These trees belong to the “Larch family”, sometimes also called “Tamarack”. Larch trees are unique because they have soft, slender leaves, which look like pine needles, but these leaves are shed every year. Unlike the true conifers like spruce and pine, which keep their leaves all year, these trees are deciduous. Like maples and oak they shed their leaves every fall, and grow a new set every spring. If you are here in spring or summer you can touch these leaves which are very soft and gentle. If you are here in the winter, the trees look dead, but they are not dead, they revive every spring.

The two larch trees you see here were planted many years ago by people who enjoyed their beauty and the soft feel of the leaves. Although there are several kinds of larch trees in Canada these two are European larch, brought from the old country to be enjoyed here in Sault Ste. Marie.

The black locust trees growing along the west side of the Trail are interesting. If you are here in spring you may see groups of white flowers on these trees and often a very pleasant perfume-like scent in the air. In the winter you will see long pods hanging from the branches that remind you of beans growing in the garden. This tree is a member of the Bean family and, like the beans you grow in the garden, they produce long pod structures with seeds inside. Take a close look at the bark. It is smooth and brown and as the trees get bigger deeply furrowed. Black locust trees are native to the eastern United States, but have been planted in southern Canada, where they grow very well. The wood is heavy and strong, and was used by farmers for

fenceposts because it persists for a long time in the soil.

Species	Database	Date Found
<i>Black locust</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>European larch</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Trembling aspen</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	

In spring, look for birds such as brown creeper, chickadees, flickers, ruby-crowned kinglet and yellow-rumped warblers among these trees.

Species	Database	Date Found
<i>Cavity trees</i>	http://www.lrconline.com/Extension_Notes_English/pdf/cvtytrs.pdf	
<i>Brown creeper</i>	http://www.ofo.ca/index.php	
<i>Chickadee</i>	http://www.ofo.ca/index.php	
<i>Flicker</i>	http://www.ofo.ca/index.php	
<i>Ruby-crowned kinglet</i>	http://www.ofo.ca/index.php	
<i>Yellow-rumped warbler</i>	http://www.ofo.ca/index.php	

Under the walkway next to the dam you can find wild cucumber growing. Along the walkway is a basswood tree which normally doesn't grow this far north.

Species	Database	Date Found
<i>Wild Cucumber</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Basswood</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	

Crossing the top of the dam, you will notice that many of the trees at the edge of the pond have died. This has happened because some of the trees cannot have their roots covered with water, which happened because of the heavy snowfall in winter and the heavy rains in the spring. Some trees survived. Can you identify the ones that did?

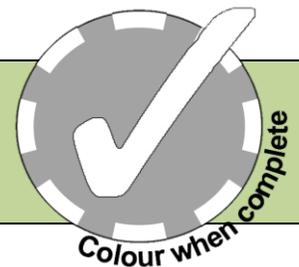
On the north side is a reservoir created by the [Sault Ste. Marie Region Conservation Authority](#) to control the water flow through the city of Sault Ste. Marie. Often there are Mallard ducks on the water and they usually nest nearby, along the shore.

Note the rocky area near the path, just beside the water control structure. The rocks are there to prevent erosion. After the rocks were placed there, seeds from several very hardy plants fell there and germinated, and healthy plants started to grow. If you look carefully, you will see chokecherry, red-osier dogwood, pin cherry, beaked hazel, hawthorn, Tartarian honey suckle and white birch. All of these plants produced berries or seeds that are useful to wildlife. In late summer and fall, birds and small rodents feed on these seeds as they get ready for winter.

Species	Database	Date Found
<i>Mallard Ducks</i>	http://www.ofo.ca/index.php	
<i>Chokecherry</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Red Osier Dogwood</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Pin Cherry</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Beaked Hazel</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Hawthorn</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Tartarian Honeysuckle</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	

If you are here in spring, after the snow has gone and before the leaves are present on the trees, look closely at the small trees growing among the rocks. On some of them, mostly the pin cherry, you may see small tooth marks where something has eaten the bark of these trees. Although we do not see them during winter when the snow is deep, mice are present under the snow and feast on the bark of these trees. Wildlife habitat under the snow is called “the subnivean environment”. Do you think the mice flourished in their subnivean environment?

Carmen’s Way



Trail Marker 19 km (Industries and Homes)

Along the section of the Trail which follows Carmen’s Way were planted Carolina poplar and maples. The Carolina poplar is a hybrid tree of the cottonwood and the black poplar. It was planted for its rapid growth. Compare the size of the poplar trees to the maple. These hybrid

poplars are not native, so it will be interesting to see how they survive in our Sault Ste. Marie ecosystem.

Species	Database	Date Found
<i>Carolina Poplar</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	
<i>Maple Tree</i>	www.northernontarioflora.ca	

If you enjoyed this nature walk, try the other walks at www.hubtrail.com.