

Casque Isles Hiking Trail Users Guide

Background;

The Casque Isles Hiking Trail is just one of 17 trails from Espanola to Thunder Bay that make up the Voyageur Trail Association. The Voyageur Trail Association's (VTA) vision is to work with volunteers and partner organizations to build a continuous wilderness-style hiking trail from Sudbury through Sault Ste. Marie to Thunder Bay, a distance of some 1,100 km paralleling the rugged Northern Ontario shores of Lake Huron and Lake Superior.

Our Trail is also registered as part of the Trans Canada Trail (TCT or The Great Trail). With over 20,000 kms of multi-use trails nationwide, The Great Trail connects us all together. We are proud to be affiliated with these organizations.

The Casque Isles Hiking Trail was originally marked and cut out of the bush in the 1970's as a Pedestrian/Hiking only Trail. Our Trail is registered with the TCT for the purposes of hiking, backpacking, snowshoeing and bushwhack skiing. While some parts of our Trail use Roadways, i.e. in Rainbow Falls Provincial Park, by far the majority of it was intended for hiking off of the beaten path. In most places the trail is too rough or inaccessible for other uses anyway.

We will always endeavour to keep the Trail clear, but you may encounter fallen trees that need to be climbed over or gone around, or you may have to wade a stream during high water. This is a true wilderness Trail, and some have described parts of our Trail as "bushwhacking with blazes". In some cases and in some areas this description is true. No matter what your physical abilities, you can expect to hike about 2 km per hour on most parts of the Trail.

Safety on the Trail;

Hiking is a safe, healthful form of outdoor recreation which can be enjoyed by virtually everyone. It knows few restrictions of age or physical condition. There are no standards of physical strength or endurance. The good hiker knows her or his capabilities and acts accordingly. Health is not promoted by occasionally driving yourself beyond endurance, but by developing your capabilities systematically and intelligently.

The bush in our area demands respect. ALWAYS let someone know where you plan to hike; your route and your expected time of return. Try to hike in groups if possible. Always carry a first aid kit and some provisions in case you have to spend a night in the bush. Never underestimate the joy of an extra pair of dry socks or even a spare shirt. You will be outdoors all day, so bring a hat to shelter under and sunscreen to protect yourself. Bring enough water for yourself and remember that our Trail is typically in the back country, so proper footwear is a must. If nature calls while you are out in nature, leave a pack on the Trail at the point where you go off to do your business. Cell and data coverage isn't certain in every location, but climbing a near-by hill should improve coverage. Carry a whistle to alert others where you are. Wear bright clothing during hunting season. Three of anything is an alert signal; 3 whistles, three fires, three rocks on the beach, etc. Pay attention to where you are on the Trail, as this will help you in case of emergency. Register at any of our Sign in Boxes; this will let others know where you have been. If you are calling **911**, be ready to give them your location as best you can. Make sure to leave a call back number. The Voyageur Hiking Trail Guidebook is recommended as well as downloaded or topographical maps. More information can be had at <http://www.voyageurtrail.ca/safetygeneral.html>.

Trail Markers;

Each of the five Segments of our Trail is marked by a Trailhead Sign. Some of these require accessing our Trail through the 11 access points along the Trail. A comprehensive guide to our Trail, providing maps, GPS coordinates for Access points, and a written description can be purchased online at www.voyageurtrail.ca or the Trail route can be viewed on the Google Map layer available at www.hikesuperior.ca. The Trail is also included on map products found at www.backroadmapbooks.com.

Typically, accessing our Trail from any of the 11 points will mean that the trail that you are hiking on is maintained by our Club, not some other group. Usually our Trail passes through pretty remote country, and few other trails intersect it. We are constantly adding new markers as part of regular trail maintenance, and concentrate on ensuring that intersections are well marked. Each km is marked, beginning at Rossport (Km 0) and continuing to Terrace Bay (km 53). Intersections are marked with blue signs indicating which way to go. Away from the Trailheads, blue markers mark the main trail and white markers mark Access points and side trails. Most side trails are one way in and out. On bald rock, shoreline areas or through the raised boulder fields, rock cairns have been piled to mark the way. The top of these cairns are painted white so that they can be seen from a distance. Some of these areas have painted markings on the rock as well; just be aware that any painted marking will fade from year to year. In some bald rock areas pieces of white weeping pipe are used in addition to the blue or white markers. There are some places where others use our Trail to access areas other than our trail. If we encounter other markers than ours in these areas we add more of our markers to ensure users that they are on the right path.

Examples of markers;



Wildlife;

You can expect to see wildlife along the Trail. You will be hiking through their home. There are some camping spots, such as Twin Harbours, Worthington Bay Beach and Les Petit Ecris, but we do not maintain bear boxes at any site. Please hang your food and anything else that has a smell from a tree at night.

June is usually the worst month for blackflies and July is the favourite month for mosquitos. You should plan to bring enough repellent for your trip.

Seasonal Hiking;

You might plan your trip in the spring or fall to avoid the hottest part of the summer and the bugs, but be aware that spring run-off will swell the streams and make crossings more difficult. Most times rocks and tree trunks are used at crossings, but these may be underwater or have washed away. Also, the evenings come quickly and the temperatures are cooler in the shoulder seasons. Plan your hike accordingly.

Trail Maintenance;

When we clear the trail, we make sure that markers are in place and can be seen from a distance. That is our highest priority on any maintenance outing. Sometimes branches or downed trees can obscure markers and it may take a while to pick up the trail again. We would appreciate hearing from anyone who finds this situation so trail maintenance crews can be sent out to remedy the situation. Any input can be messaged to us at <https://www.facebook.com/CasqueIsles/>. We try to keep most of the new saplings clipped on our outings, but annual growth such as grasses or raspberry cane quickly re-generates, and every km of trail doesn't get a full brushing every year. Our main focus is to keep users from getting off the trail. Always keep an eye out for markers ahead.

Terrain;

The Casque Isles Trail begins at Rossport, and extends for 53 kms through Schreiber to Terrace Bay. The Trail passes by high cliffs and hilltops that afford spectacular vistas of Lake Superior and the surrounding area, through the forest by small lakes and ponds, and in along the rocky shoreline of Lake Superior in a few places. Our Trail is rugged, but worth the effort. Our Trail offers something for everyone. While our Trail as a whole would be classified as Double Black Diamond, there are areas that are definitely considered Blue or Black Diamond. See our brochure at www.hikesuperior.ca for suggested short hikes or plan to take advantage of our Guided Hikes.

Rating Symbol	Brief Definition	Surface	Grade	Obstacles /Steps
 easiest	Paved Accessible Trail	Paved or hard and smooth		None
 easy	Mostly smooth and wide	Dirt with occasional unevenness		2" or less, rocks and ruts
 moderate	Mostly smooth, variable width	Dirt with occasional unevenness		<8" rocks and ruts, loose material
 mod. difficult	Mostly uneven surfaces	Dirt and rock		<12" rocks and ruts, loose material
 difficult	Long rocky segments with possible drops and exposure	Dirt and loose rock with continual unevenness		12" or taller, loose rocks, exposure to drops
 extremely difficult	Long rocky segments with possible drops and exposure	Dirt and loose rock with continual unevenness		12" or taller, loose rocks, exposure to drops and excessive heat >90F



VTA Code;

- 1. Hike only along marked routes. Do not take shortcuts.**
- 2. Do not climb fences.**
- 3. Respect the privacy of people living along the trail.**
- 4. Leave the trail cleaner than you found it--carry out all litter.**
- 5. Light cooking fires at official campsites only. Drench fires after use. (Better still, carry a lightweight stove.)**
- 6. Leave flowers and plants for others to enjoy.**
- 7. Do not damage live trees or strip off bark.**
- 8. Keep dogs under control (leash if necessary) and follow your club's guidelines concerning dogs.**
- 9. Protect and do not disturb wildlife.**
- 10. Leave only your thanks and take nothing but photographs.**

BE A LOW-IMPACT HIKER!

Enjoy your hike!