



The Maitland Trail is a trail operated by the Maitland Trail Association and follows the meandering valley of the Maitland River from Goderich to Auburn, dipping south almost to Holmesville.

The Association was formed in 1975 to organize and layout the trail and encourages hiking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing along the trail. There are six sections to the trail: the General, near Lake Huron; Colborne Riverside Park; River Bank Rock Formations; Falls Conservation Area; Little Lakes; Ball's Historic Bridge and Robertson Tract at Auburn.

Any of these sections provides an opportunity for plenty of fall beauty but for many people in the Goderich-Benmiller area, a favourite fall attraction is the Little Lakes district, northeast of Benmiller. This section of the trail follows the concession road so it's open to both hikers and drivers. You can start at the east at historic Ball's Bridge which now sees little traffic since a modern bridge and new road were built to the south. The bridge has been saved for now because the old iron structure is becoming very rare and with its view of the broad Maitland, has become a favourite for sightseers, artists and fishermen.

The road heads up a small hill and through fields and hardwood bush until it comes to a series of little lakes that line both sides of the road, the hardwoods on the hills reflected in their still waters. This is the Little Lakes.

This whole section of the trail is accessible to either walkers or drivers. For those who would like to stretch their legs a little more, however, they can follow the trail north through the Robertson Tract to Auburn. The trail follows the "Blind Line" from the north edge of the Little Lakes, up the hill to the east and then into the Robertson Tract, a vast reforested area. There is a great mixture of hardwood and pine stands in this area. The trail mostly follows the north river bank and fire-lines which were cut through the forest. The trail comes out at the bridge at Auburn.

For more information on the Maitland Trail write to: The Maitland Trail Association, P.O. Box 443, Goderich, N7A 4C7.



Maitland Valley Conservation Authority offers several conservation areas that can provide scenic splendour in the Fall. Those near Listowel may want to visit the maple bush at Maple Keys Sugar Bush in Grey township. This facility, off Huron Cty. Rd. 19 between Molesworth and Ethel (watch for the signs) is best known as location of the Authority's maple syrup making exhibitions and its Maple Madness festival each spring but it also offers quiet trails through the sugar bush bright with colour this time of the year.

Goderich and Bayfield residents might want to visit Naftel's Creek Conservation Area, seven km south of Goderich on Highway 21 where hardwood forest and evergreen plantations host wildlife like raccoons, squirrels, rabbits and a variety of song birds.

But the site that the Authority chose for several years to hold its colour tour is the Wawanosh Valley Conservation Area in East Wawanosh on Nature Centre Road which leads off Highway 4, just south of Belgrave. This conservation area is home of the Wawanosh Nature Centre where school children can learn more about their natural surroundings.

The park, about five miles west of Hwy. 4, has a large parking lot by the converted barn and portable classroom that serve as home to the Nature

Centre. These buildings sit on a low hill that looks down on the Belgrave Creek just behind the barn.

There are a number of trails that can take you through the property. One leads down the lane, across the stream and into an open field area that the Authority has been planting with various varieties of bushes to provide feed and shelter for wildlife.

From this open area, trails lead off to the left into the bush. The first of these will take you up over a hill, through a hardwood bush and down into the heart of the forest. The trail leads down to the edge of the Maitland River. Here, in both Fall and Spring, you may be lucky enough to witness the migration of salmon upstream from Lake Huron. Some branch off the main river into Belgrave Creek.

The trail leads along the side of the Maitland through a lowland area dark with large cedar trees. The path eventually curves back away from the riverside. The trail crosses a boardwalk and several small bridges to help you keep your feet dry in the swampy conditions. Ferns grow profusely. Further along the path branches into different trails, each marked by coloured symbols. One of these leads, off to the left, through a mature pine plantation and on up the hill into hardwood forest. The other path also leads through hardwood forest and back out to the main country lane through the old pasture area. When you exit from either trail onto the lane, you turn right and head back toward the Nature Centre and parking lot.

This conservation area is populated by deer, grouse, squirrels, raccoons, song birds and herons and is host to many species during migration times.

For more information on any of the conservation areas contact Maitland Valley Conservation Authority, Box 127, Wroxeter, NOG 2X0 or call 335-3557.

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