

Sweetwater Badge Hike Series

The Sweetwater Badge Series celebrates the glorious sugar maple at a time when we herald the arrival of Spring. Should you choose to hike in March and April, you will surely have a sweet time out on the trails, and you may be lucky enough to observe the tapping of the trees and the sugar shacks turning sap into maple syrup.

To earn this Sweetwater Badge, you must complete all six hikes on your own or on organized hikes and take the required photographs. You will have a sweet time out on the trails and maybe even be lucky enough to partake in a maple syrup festival along the way. The trails are all in or near the Caledon section of the Bruce Trail. Kilometre references are taken from The Bruce Trail Reference, Edition 29.

Your hiking log should include the date, who you hiked with and badge requirements for each hike

Sweetwater Badge Hike Descriptions

Sweetwater Badge – Hike #1

Hockley Area Loop Hike

Bruce Trail Reference Maps & Trail Guide, Edition 29, Map 18

Distance: Approx. 11 km

Park: At a parking lot located on 7th Line immediately east of Airport Road. Coordinates: 43.960477, -79.979773

Hike:

Take the 7th Line Parking Access Trail to the main Trail at km 42.2.

Cross the stile and hike north from km 42.2 to km 47.1.

Take the Hockleycrest Side Trail from this north junction to the south junction at km 46.0.

Turn right and take the main Trail back to the 7th Line Parking Access Trail, which leads you back to your car.

Photos Required:

Photo of the modern tapping method found along the main Trail. Photo of the sign, “Je Suis d’Erable” on the sugar shack as viewed from the trail. Please stay on the trail to take the picture of the sign.

Photo of the row of old maples as you walk along the Hockleycrest Side Trail.

Special Notes:

From December 1 - April 1, at km 46, veer left onto the Hockleycrest Side Trail.

Follow the blue blazes to the north junction at km 47.1.

Turn right and follow the white blazes of the main Trail (Winter Alternate Route) back to the 7th Line Access Trail at km 42.2. When walking or snowshoeing on the trails groomed for skiing, please keep to the edges and avoid ski tracks.

Sweetwater Badge – Hike #2

Terra Cotta Loop Hike

Bruce Trail Reference Maps & Trail Guide, Edition 29, Map 14

Distance: Approx. 6 km

Park: At Terra Cotta Conservation Area (entry fee) 14452 Winston Churchill Blvd, Halton Hills, ON L7G 0N9

Coordinates: N 43.722496, W 79.956865

Park maps are posted at the parking lot kiosk and along the trails.

Hike:

From the main parking lot, take the Terra Cotta Lane Trail (purple conservation trail markers).

Turn left onto the McGregor Spring Pond Trail (pink markers).

Soon after, turn left at the Vaughan Trail (yellow markers). Along the way, the main Bruce Trail merges onto this trail. Follow the white blazes away from the stile. (Do not leave the conservation area.)

Continue on the Bruce Trail to the Bruce Trail Terra Cotta Side Trail. Follow the blue blazes.

Eventually, the Terra Cotta Side Trail exits the conservation area. Do not leave, but follow the second entrance of the A.F. Coventry Trail (orange markers) back to the parking lot.

On the other side of the parking lot, head towards the Welcome Centre.

Take the Wetland Trail (black markers) to the right.

From this short loop trail, you can see the Rae Horst Sugar Shack. Leave the trail to take a picture of the sugar shack.

Return to the parking lot and your vehicle.

Photo Required:

Photo of the sugar shack

Notes: If you complete this loop in March/April, you may be there during the Maple Syrup Festival (additional fees). When you purchase a festival pass online, it covers your admission to Bruce's Mill, Kortright Centre, Island Lake and Terra Cotta for the duration of the festival. Check <https://maplesyrupfest.com/> for details.

There are many trails through this conservation area, so you can extend your time out on the trails.

Sweetwater Badge – Hike #3

Island Lake Loop Hike

Distance: Approx. 12 km (A downloadable map is available on the Credit Valley Conservation website. Maps are displayed at trail entrance kiosks and throughout the park.)

Park: At the Island Lake Community Trails North Entrance Parking Lot, 246306 Hockley Road. From Highway 10/24, turn east onto Hockley Road for 400 metres. The parking lot is on the right-hand side. (Alternative parking is available at 673173 Hurontario Street, Mono, ON. From Highway 10/24, turn east

onto Hockley Road. Continue straight onto Side Road 5. Turn right onto Hurontario Street. The distance of the hike from this parking lot is approx. 10 km.)

Hike:

From the Community Trails North Entrance Parking Lot, take the Island Lake Family Trail.

At the Station 51 signpost, continue straight onto the Vikki Barron Lakeside Trail.

Follow the signposts along this trail to the Station 10 signpost. At this trail intersection, turn left and follow this trail to the Sugar Bush Trail.

Take the Sugar Bush Trail towards the sugar shack. Follow the trail in a counter-clockwise direction.

As you pass the sugar shack for a second time, take the linking trail at Station 20 to the Memorial Forest Trail.

Turn left at the Station 22 signpost to follow the Memorial Forest Trail in a clockwise direction.

At the Station 30 signpost, turn left and continue to a park road.

Turn left onto the road and continue hiking.

Before the bend in the road, turn left at the Station 33 signpost and continue along the Vikki Baron Lakeside Trail to the Station 51 signpost.

Veer left and take the Island Lake Family Trail back to the parking lot.

Photos Required:

Photo of the sugar shack and a picture of the overhead "Sugar Bush" sign Photo of the Stone Tree Wall and another of the Memorial Leaf Wall

Notes:

Park fees may be in effect during the Maple Syrup Festival in March/April. When you purchase a festival pass online, it covers your admission to Bruce's Mill, Kortright Centre, Island Lake and Terra Cotta for the duration of the festival. Check <https://maplesyrupfest.com/> for details.

Sweetwater Badge – Hike #4

Forks of the Credit Hike (Alternate hike described later due to local parking restrictions) Bruce Trail Reference Maps & Trail Guide, Edition 29, Map 15

Distance: Approx. 8.5 km

Park: Roadside parking at km 8.8 on the Forks of the Credit Road between Chisholm and Dominion Streets.

Coordinates: 43.803809, -79.993002

Hike:

From km 8.8, walk along Dominion Road.

At km 10.0, turn right onto the Dorothy Medhurst Side Trail. When the side trail meets the main Trail, turn left.

Hike from km 13.4 to km 11.3.

Turn right onto the Cataract Side Trail and hike in and out. Hike from km 11.3 back to roadside parking at km 8.8.

Photo Required:

Photo of the Forks of the Credit from the bridge on Dominion Road. The Credit River providing a transportation route was a gathering spot – a place where trading goods, like maple sugar, happened.

Special Note:

Due to local COVID-19 restrictions, roadside parking along Forks of the Credit Road has been temporarily closed. An alternate Forks of the Credit hike has been created.

Sweetwater Badge – Hike #4 (Alternate hike)

Alternate Forks of the Credit Hike

Alternate Forks of the Credit Hike

Bruce Trail Reference Maps & Trail Guide, Edition 29, Map 15

Distance: Approx. 8 km

Park: Forks of the Credit Provincial parking lot off McLaren Road (Check Forks of the Credit Provincial Park online for current parking information and fees.)

Coordinates: N. 43.824871°, W 80.004031°

Hike:

From the main entrance, take the Meadow Trail to the main Bruce Trail. (Refer to the map at the entrance.)

Turn left onto the main Trail instead of going downhill past a No Exit sign.

Follow the white blazes on the main Trail past the wooden dodgeway at the park boundary.

Take the Dorothy Medhurst Side Trail, which will be on your right.

When the side trail ends, go right and follow the main Trail.

Where the main Trail and the Cataract Side Trail meet, stop to take a picture of the Credit River on your left.

At this point, you can do an in and out hike to the falls, which will add 2.2 km to your route.

Continue along the main Trail.

At the top of the escarpment, go straight and refollow the Meadow Trail.

At the next trail intersection (as marked by a park post on your left), go right to follow the Trans Canada Trail back to the parking lot.

Photo Required:

Photo of the Credit River. The Credit River providing a transportation route was a gathering spot – a place where trading goods, like maple sugar, happened.

Sweetwater Badge – Hike #5 (Alternate hike described later due to road closures)

Mixed Trail Shuttle Hike

Bruce Trail Reference Maps & Trail Guide, Edition 29, Map 17

Distance: Approx. 15 km

Park: Park a car at roadside parking on Duffys Lane (near 16024 Duffys Lane) just north of Old Church Road. (Note: Enter Duffys Lane from Old Church Road. You cannot follow Duffys Lane south from Highway 9 to the roadside parking as Albion Hills Conservation Area is directly north of the roadside

parking.) Shuttle to roadside parking at km 35.1 on Coolihans Sideroad, east of where the Trail crosses the road.

Coordinates (for parking on Coolihans): N 43.937967, W 79.934650

Hike:

Take the main Trail on the south side of Coolihans Sideroad.

Hike for approximately 600 m. Watch for the large Oak Ridges Moraine Trail signboard to the left. This point is the western terminus of the approximately 300 km Oak Ridges Moraine Trail.

Follow the Oak Ridges Trail for about 7 km as it travels east to Humber Station Road. Points of reference within this section: cross a single lane road, hike south on Centreville Creek Road for approx. 400 m, hike south on The Gore Road for approx. 500 m.

Humber Station is the next road. Turn right (south) onto Humber Station Road.

Hike on this road for approx. 4.5 km until you reach the Caledon Trailway on the left. Points of reference within this section: Cross Finnerty Side Road, continue on Humber Station Road past where the Oak Ridges Trail leaves the road for the forest (Palgrave Forest), veer slightly left at Patterson Sideroad. Enter the Caledon Trailway on the left (east) side of Humber Station Road.

Then make an immediate right onto the Humber Valley Heritage Trail (HVHT). Cross over four stiles before you reach the driveway of the Albion Hills Community Farm. (If this section is too wet, you can follow Humber Station Road to the Community Farm.)

Turn left onto the driveway and follow the driveway for approx. 100 m until you reach a fence-protected area on the right. Cross the field to the right of this fencing and follow the white blazes into the forest. (If the field is too overgrown, you can follow the suggested re-route below.)

Continue to follow the white blazes of the HVHT through a section of Albion Hills Conservation Area.

Watch for and photograph the sugar shack. (During winter months, stay to the right of the cross-country ski tracks.)

Continue along the trail to Duffy's Lane and your vehicle.

Photo Required:

Photo of the sugar shack as you follow the Humber Valley Heritage Trail through Albion Hills Conservation Area

Special Notes:

The HVHTA is a small association. The short section of trail between the Caledon Trailway and Albion Hills Conservation Area is maintained but not regularly. Should you be hiking at a time when the field is overgrown, you can follow the suggested re-route. You could also consider hiking this one from South to North as the destination across the field is more obvious.

The Bruce Trail, the Oak Ridges Moraine Trail and the Humber Valley Heritage Trail are all marked with white blazes.

You may wish to check the conservation area website as Albion Hills occasionally hosts bike races on its trails.

Suggested Re-Route:

Follow the driveway of the Albion Hills Community Farm.

At the Y intersection, go right on the paved road.

Turn right just past the yellow Trail Crossing sign (not going across the bridge over the river) onto the Albion Hills Conservation Area's red trail.

When you cross the river over a bridge, you are back on the original route and you follow the white blazes of the HVHT through a section of Albion Hills Conservation Area. Watch for and photograph the sugar shack. (During winter months, stay to the right of the cross-country ski tracks.) Continue along the trail to Duffys Lane and your vehicle.

Sweetwater Badge – Hike #5 (Alternate hike)

Alternate Mixed Trail Shuttle Hike

Distance: Approx. 6 km

Park: Park at roadside parking on Duffys Lane (near 16024 Duffys Lane) just north of Old Church Road. (Note: Enter Duffys Lane from Old Church Road. You cannot follow Duffys Lane south from Highway 9 to the roadside parking as Albion Hills Conservation Area is directly north of the roadside parking.)

Hike:

Follow the white blazes of the Humber Valley Heritage Trail (HVHT) away from Old Church Road and into the Albion Hills Conservation Area.

Continue following the trail and its white blazes through the conservation area. (During winter months, stay to the right of the cross-country ski tracks.)

Watch for and photograph the sugar shack.

At Conservation marker 14 just after you cross a bridge, the HVHT continues ahead while the conservation trail continues to the right. Continue following the white blazes.

After entering a field, cross the field. A fence-protected area will be on your right.

When you reach the driveway of the Albion Hills Community Farm, turn left and follow the driveway for approx. 100 m.

Before you reach Humber Station Road, the trail continues on your right. A TRCA counter shows you where it turns off the driveway.

Cross over four stiles as you follow the white blazes leading you to the Caledon Trailway.

At this point, turn around and retrace your steps back to your vehicle on Duffys Lane.

Photo Required:

Photo of the sugar shack as you follow the Humber Valley Heritage Trail through Albion Hills Conservation Area

Special Notes (for the alternate hike):

The HVHTA is a small association. The short section of trail between Albion Hills Conservation Area and the Caledon Trailway is maintained but not regularly. Should you be hiking at a time when the field is overgrown, you can turn around and retrace your steps at any point.

You may wish to check the conservation area website as Albion Hills occasionally hosts bike races on its trails.

Sweetwater Badge – Hike #6

Glen Haffy Loop Hike

Bruce Trail Reference Maps & Trail Guide, Edition 29, Map 17

Distance: Approx. 12 km

Park: Roadside parking at km 35.1 on Coolihans Sideroad, east of where the Trail crosses the road.
Coordinates: 43.937967, -79.934650

Hike:

Take the Glen Haffy Side Trail on the north side of Coolihans, following the blue blazes.

When crossing Highway 9, take extreme care and continue to the right and then left onto Mono-Adjala Townline.

The side trail heads off the road on the left after 670 m.

When the side trail ends and you meet the main Trail at km 40.6, turn left.

Follow the main Trail south.

Once you complete the Highway 9 crossing and enter Glen Haffy Conservation Area, continue following the white blazes of the main Trail to Coolihans Sideroad and your car.

Photos Required:

Photo of the maple-tree lined laneway at Briardale Farm on Glen Haffy Rd, just south of Highway 9

Photo of a hiker in your group hugging one of the giant maples along the main Trail