HIKING TRAILS OF NEW BRUNSWICK

3rd edition

by Marianne and H.A. Eiselt

Turtle Mountain Trail

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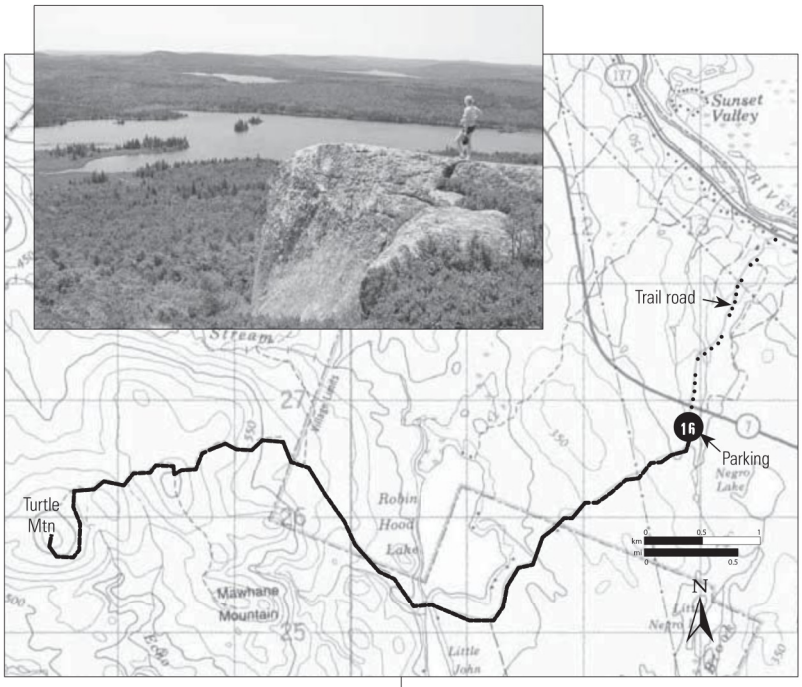
16. Turtle Mountain Trail

Length: 24.0 km (15.0 mi) rtn
Type: linear
Difficulty: moderate
Ascent: 220 m (600 ft)
Hiking Time: 7 hrs rtn
Map: 21 G/8 Saint John
Trailhead GPS Reference:
N 45° 21' 54", W 66° 16' 52"
Trail Condition: several very large mudholes, rocky

Access: From Fredericton, take Highway 7 south to Welsford. From the Irving gas station at Welsford, continue on Highway 7 in a southerly direction. After 6.9 km (4.3 mi), turn left at exit 71 onto Highway 177 towards Westfield. Follow this road for 4.2 km (2.6 mi) to a blind hill. On the right side of the road is civic number 513. Directly next to it is a dirt road that turns back somewhat. Take this road, pass a small parking area, keep right when the road forks, and pass by a small dwelling on the right side of the road. The rough dirt road continues through woods, passes underneath power lines, and reaches the Highway 7 underpass at 1.8 km (1.1 mi). Just beyond the underpass, turn left. Directly to the right is a gate barring entrance to a private road. The gate can be opened in season, but whether or not vehicles of non-residents are permitted to pass through could not be ascertained. The trail length is measured from this gate.

Trail Markings: None. The trail is maintained by four-wheelers and is generally easy to find. There are, however, a number of spurs that may be confusing. When in doubt, take the wider and more frequently used trail.

Trail Description: Passing through the gate, follow a wide dirt road. The road ascends, goes underneath some power lines, and passes a few cottages on both sides. Follow the main dirt road until, at 2.9 km (1.8 mi), you reach a narrow bridge. There is a place to park vehicles. Vehicles other than four-wheelers cannot get beyond this point. The bridge crosses a narrow connection between Robin Hood Lake on the right and Little John Lake on the left.

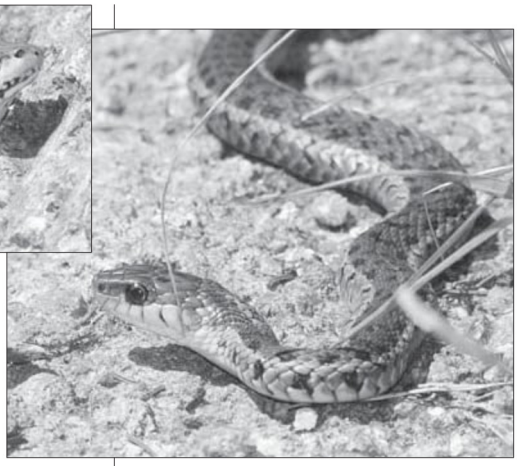


16. Turtle Mountaint Trail; on top of the mountain (inset)

The rocky trail first ascends in a northwesterly direction. At a fork, keep to the right, as this path is drier. Upon reaching a former clearing, you can see two unnamed hills to the left. The trail crosses an old grassy woods road, continues straight ahead, and then swings to the left as an overgrown spur turns off to the right.

After a while, the trail leaves the woods and continues in a westerly direction. The landscape here is covered with carpets of sheep laurel, Irish moss, and black spruce. At 6.0 km (3.7 mi) you reach a plateau. Here the main trail continues to the right.

After a short distance, the trail forks. Keep to the right. A few steps thereafter, the trail forks again. You can take either trail, but the right trail is usually somewhat drier. The path dips down to some big mud puddles and then ascends again. Keep left at a fork and continue on



A green frog and snake seen along the trail

the wider trail, which is quite rooty in this area. The trail continues up and down through a nice open stand of birch trees, and then ascends again. Here, you have to bypass a few mudholes.

Pass a number of spurs that turn off to the right; when in doubt, keep left. The trail, which now has turned in a southerly direction, descends gently but continuously through fairly dense forest before it reaches a brook. Beyond the crossing, the trail first ascends through another stand of beautiful birch trees with a few ups and downs, then ascends more steeply. The trail leads through hay-scented ferns, and finally reaches a bald rock area on which the trail climbs rather steeply to the rounded summit of Turtle Mountain.

Just below the summit is a somewhat sheltered area that can serve as a campsite for those who plan to spend the night on Turtle Mountain.

Trail Features: The main feature of this trail is the beautiful view from the top of the "tortoise-shell" Turtle Mountain. Turtle Lake, with its small, boggy peninsula, lies just below to the southwest, with Labrador Lake, Sherwood Lake, and Hasty Lake in the distance. Big Indian Lake can be seen in a west-northwesterly direction. On a clear day you can see the Bay of Fundy. In season, the blueberries along the trail and on top are delicious. Black bear, moose, and deer may be seen.

In
New Brunswick, you can always reach some outpost of civilization within a couple of days and usually much sooner — provided, of course, that you are able to use map and compass. It is not smart to undertake a multi-day trip without some basic training in their use, and such training could even come in handy on long day hikes. All better compasses (and other kinds are worthless at best and at worst outright dangerous) come with reasonably detailed instructions. Most books on hiking cover this subject.

All maps in *Hiking Trails of New Brunswick* include an arrow pointing to **true north**. There is roughly a 22-degree difference (declination) between true north and **magnetic north**, to which every compass needle points. Failure to observe this declination results in considerable error: for every three miles hiked, you will deviate from the true course by more than one mile! In addition, hikers are advised to carry a topographical (or "topo") map of areas where trails are less groomed. Some local libraries and stores carry topos; if you cannot find them locally, contact one of the Topographic Map Regional Distribution Centres such as Federal Maps Inc., 425 Adelaide St. W., Toronto, ON M5V 3C1, e-mail: contact@fedmaps.com or shop online, e.g., at www.maptown.com/index.html.

Global Positioning Systems (GPS) are widely available and can be used to pinpoint your present location — provided they function properly, have been programmed with the appropriate map datum, and are fed with reasonably fresh batteries. Do not rely on them. While it is possible to program a GPS with waypoints, we never do it, as this playing with electronics seriously

interferes with the true wilderness experience. Another electronic tool that has become a fixture in some people's packs is cellphones. While it may sound appealing to have such a tool ready for emergencies, its uses are severely limited. Examining the coverage maps provided by the three cellphone providers Aliant, Rogers, and Telus, you will discover that most backcountry areas are not covered. In that sense, a cellphone may actually provide you with a misplaced sense of security.

Other hazards exist, among them unstable cliffs along Fundy coastlines and at some summits in Mount Carleton Provincial Park. Also hazardous are the high tides along the Fundy Coast. There are places where hikers may get trapped between an unscalable cliff and the rising water. None of these places are included in this book. However, for some hikes along the coast, you should carry **tide tables**, available on the Web at www.waterlevels.gc.ca/cgi-bin/tide-shc.cgi?queryType=showRegion&language=emglish&region=5.

Another problem should be mentioned here, even though it is not so much a hazard as a nuisance. In the spring, there may be a significant amount of deadfall even on maintained trails. Typically, this is the result of storms the previous fall, and it usually takes a while for the cleanup crews to finish their work. For safety's sake, follow the old-time lumberman's rule: don't step on anything you can step over, and don't step on anything you can step around.

Campfires must be put out before you leave your campsite. That doesn't mean they should die down to just a few embers or a little smouldering. It means OUT COLD. The danger of forest fires in many parts of New Brunswick is amplified by the extensive planting of softwood monoculture forests. Actually, on day hikes fires are not needed at all, and on longer backpacking trips, lightweight white gas/naphtha or butane stoves are vastly superior to campfires as they cook much quicker and cleaner. We strongly recommend them.

How to Use This Book

Distances in the *Hiking Trails of New Brunswick* have been obtained from various sources, including a pedometer. Hiking times are, of course, highly personal. Our times are based on a somewhat relaxed

pace with a few short breaks. We know that many trails could be "done" in considerably less time, but after all, this book is about hiking, not running. Once, when we remarked to a fellow hiker about someone who had hiked through the Grand Canyon from the North to the South Rim in a single day (it took us four, plus two for side trips), he replied: "So what? The mountains don't care." This pretty much reflects our attitude. We suggest that individuals hike some of the shorter trails first, keeping track of their own times. They can then find an appropriate multiplier before attempting any of the longer hikes.

The description of each trail in this book starts with a heading with some shorthand information about the trail. The **hiking time** and the topo maps have already been discussed. Sometimes, other useful maps exist (especially in parks); in such cases we have indicated this. We generally distinguish between two **types of trails**: linear and loop trails. In the case of a linear trail, hikers must retrace their steps (or find some other way out); loops end at the trailhead. The **lengths** of the trails are always the distances back to the trailhead; for linear trails, they are twice the one-way distance. This way, hikers can see at a glance if a trail is suitable for them. Measuring the **ascent** of a trail is difficult: ideally, hikers would like to know the total ascent they have to climb. Here, however, we can only provide the vertical distance between the lowest and the highest elevation of a trail. The **difficulty** of a trail is measured on a scale from easy (e), to moderate (m), to strenuous (s) with intermediate degrees easy-to-moderate (e-m) and moderate-to-strenuous (m-s). Like hiking time, the difficulty of a trail is personal, so we recommend that you check your own ability and rating against ours. Information concerning the **trail condition** points out some of the obstacles found along the trail, such as wet spots or rough sections. Again, trail conditions change with the seasons: water levels tend to be higher in spring, and deadfall is likely to be gone from park trails by mid-season.

We sincerely hope that our readers will have as much fun hiking New Brunswick's trails as we had when writing this book. There's a lot to discover, and we wish you "Happy Trails" as you explore this diverse, beautiful province holding *Hiking Trails of New Brunswick* in hand.

— M. and H.A. Eiselt

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