

**Tip to Tip for Africa 2009,**  
**Prince Edward Island, Canada**  
**October 10 – 12**  
***Detailed Confederation Trail Guide***

***Saturday, Tignish to Wellington***

**Tignish** is the western terminus of the Confederation Trail just as it was for the railway. Little remains from rail days except the open station area with the “T” on the north side where they used to turn the engines around for the return trip. The station area has been turned into a large kilometre-zero central park by the community. A short distance away, again to the north, is St. Simon and St. Jude Church. It was built in 1860 and contains a tracker-action organ built by Louis Mitchell of Montreal.

The community name is said to come from “Mtegenetig”, a Mi’Maq term for “trail”. Tignish is about 13 km. from the lighthouse and windmills at North Cape and about 3 km. from beaches at Tignish Shore. It is home to the Tignish Cultural Centre dedicated to the French and Irish heritage of the community.

Ascension Bridge is the last remaining bridge over a road in the province. Farther along, an old boiler, cut out on both ends, forms a narrow passage under the trail that is used as part of a dogsled trail in winter. The district of **Ascension** was the scene of a tragic train wreck where four lives were lost in 1932. An interpretation sign commemorates the event and those who perished.

Tank Pond, nearby on the opposite side of the trail, had silted in over many years but is restored once again as a deep fishing pond where ducks and herons can be seen. If you look in the large culvert under the trail, you will note that it also serves as a fish ladder. Originally this pond was created by the PEI Railway to provide water for steam trains. The old foundation of a water tank remains near the trail shelter.

Wetland habitat is predominant in the area. With it comes wetland plants, trees and other species. Eastern white cedar is found only in the western end of P.E.I. Also found are black-billed cuckoos and white-winged crossbills. Drowned trees indicate beaver activity and provide for woodpeckers. Many small birds such as warblers and chickadees are found in alder and juniper. White ash trees are also found along the trail and were well used by first peoples.

**Km 11.1 - St. Louis** community on route 152 developed a trail access and rest stop which could be a model for any community. Large elm trees are scattered along the upper Montrose River watershed, enjoying the shallow water table in the flood plain.

**Huntley** is named for Sir Henry Vere Huntley, Lt. Governor of P.E.I. in the 1840s. A trestle bridge provides a vista over Huntley Creek. Downstream was the site of an early power dam which provided electricity in Alberton. A glacial era esker crosses the trail at the location of a large gravel pit, and ends near the trail at km. 24. A series of interpretive signs on local birds are also found from here to km. 24.

**Km 21.3** - The Town of **Alberton** is on a short spur from the main trail where a fieldstone station remains as a feature in Alberton Station Park. It was built in 1906 by Schurmans Ltd. A date-stone is located above the central window on the trail side. Alberton was named for Albert Edward, later King Edward VII.

**Km 26.8 - Elmsdale** was named for the elm trees you have been seeing for the last few kilometers. Naturally-occurring elms exist mainly in the western end of the province. Higher ground permits more agriculture as indicated by more open landscape. This is potato country and residents have commemorated the industry with a monument in a

new trail-side park. The first of several Trans Canada Trail Discovery Panel sites is here also.

One of the province's three grain elevators is located beside the trail just south of Elmsdale.

Elm, yellow birch and beech are more frequent but habitat in this region is mixed wetland and upland with some indications of our forest industry. Strip-harvesting of softwood and some plantations of pine and juniper are evident. So too are wetlands with beaver dams and the now-familiar drowned trees.

**Km 35.5 - Bloomfield Station** is one of the many small communities enroute.

Services are available at Bloomfield Corner and not far away is MacAusland's Woolen Mill. John Joe Scenic Heritage Road is nearby also.

A small trail bridge crosses Cain's Brook, which is the stream that once powered the machinery at MacAusland's. It is not yet known what function the concrete abutments beside the trail served. The brook flows into the Mill River.

**Duvar**, at the next crossroad, was named for John Hunter Duvar, a fisheries inspector and poet.

**Km 42.0** - Route 143 at **Howlan** leads to Mill River Provincial Park approximately 4 km to the east. It was named for George W. Howlan, Lt. Governor of P.E.I., 1894-9.

Carruthers Brook bridge overlooks what is now a quiet fishing stream but at one time a dam created a mill pond for another woolen mill and was also used by the railway for water for the steam engines. The brook is another tributary of the Mill River. Large white pine trees are noticeable along the trail.

**Shelters located at km 0, 2.0, 2.8, 6.1, 13.0, 17.2, 20.0, 26, 37.6, 40.4 8 (Watch trail distance markers)**

Approaching the village of O'Leary, the trail passes through an extensive wetland with a large beaver house and cat-tails. This is a tributary of the Trout River. There have been many washouts here due to beaver activity and one even stole a piece of a trail warning barricade, adding it to the top of his house. Watch along the route for underwater beaver baffle pipes which permit water to flow but maintain sufficient levels to keep these industrious critters happy.

**Km. 44.7 - O'Leary** is the agriculture centre for the region with potato warehouses and shipping depots plus general services. The old railway station has been restored for business offices and a small park on its road side contains a war memorial. The O'Leary Potato Museum is just around the corner.

The trail provides an elevated vista over Leard's Pond where Leard's Mill, a restored traditional flour mill, uses water power. There is an extensive trail system along the lower part of this waterway, near the Western Road.

**Km 49.9 - Coleman** is the exit point for West Point and Cedar Dunes Prov. Park.

An extensive wetland area is found south of Coleman, and one small bog. Sheep laurel and wild rose can be found in season about mid-June. Near a small bridge over Mary River, there are hay-scented, sensitive and wood ferns. A short distance away in a deep hollow is Mary Creek. Cedar, old-man's beard on white spruce, and jack pine are found in the immediate area.

An old derelict station sits beside the trail at **West Devon** waiting for someone to discover a reason to restore it. The large timbers used are typical of railway construction.

Next stop is Portage where the trail crosses the Western Road.

**Km 59.1** - The pond between the trail and the highway at **Portage** is a Provincial Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Waterfowl, amphibians, and reptiles are seen in the

area. Pitcher plants are noted growing out of the water in the north end and green snakes have been found near the trail. They are scarce in this province. Trail in this area passes through wetlands with beaver and a variety of birds. Wild iris, also known as blue flag, is found in season, usually by early June. Also seen in this section was a spectacular purple fringed orchid growing out of a wetland beside cat-tails. The trail crosses the road at **McNeill's Mills** which is named for John McNeill, operator of grist and saw mills over a century ago.

**Shelters located at km. 44.5, 46.3, 51.3, 59.1, 61.8, 66.7, 69.0**



Ellerslie Creek, under the trail

**Km 70.1** - Passing more wetlands, the trail reaches **Ellerslie Bog**, the most extensive bog on the entire trail. It is owned by the province and managed by Environment as a natural area. A boardwalk extends out into the trail which features interpretive signage on a platform at the end.

Just past the road into **Ellerslie** is a bridge over Ellerslie Creek and one of the treasures under the trail. Down the wooden stairs on the west side of the trail one can see under the main trail bridge. It is high concrete arch, with a date at the top. Almost all railway structures contain a date stone. That includes stations, bridges, culverts, foundations (water towers) and at one time every railway tie under the rails contained a date nail, one with a flat head and the year on the top. This was all a part of the railway maintenance program.

**Km 74.3 - Port Hill Station** was on a clay road outside of Tyne Valley. The Palmyra Trail extends from here into the community along the road. Trails into both these communities figure into the plans of a community development program to connect to Green Park and the Path of our Forefathers on Lennox Island, thus creating a loop from this trail and access to more services for trail users.

**Km. 78.3** - Wetlands predominate almost to **Northam** where higher ground is in agricultural use. The area south of the road was heavily damaged in a very heavy rain storm in September 1999 when an entire section of the trail bed was lost because existing culverts could not manage heavy flooding.

Local lore indicates that the next hardwood land on the east side of the trail was a seasonal camping area of native peoples.

**Km. 82.9** - At **Richmond** the trail once again crosses Route 2.

On the other side of the highway, the trail crosses a dam which at one time contained a millpond on a stream to the Little Trout River. Further along is a small trail bridge across the stream that is known locally as Red Bridge. Local names for physical features are not uncommon on the Island.

Approaching Wellington one passes through a provincial natural area managed by the Forestry Branch featuring a stand of white ash trees with young elm trees in the understorey. Also in the area is a Juniper plantation.

**Km. 90.3** - The trail passes through the community of **Wellington**, parallel to the main street. It crosses the Grand River, a pleasant rest stop with a view down the river. On the south side, a railway caboose has been restored as a craft shop for tourists. This is the exit point from the trail to the Evangeline Region.

**Shelters located at Km. 71.4, 77.1, 81.6, 82.9**

We stop in **Wellington** and will be bused to our hotel in Summerside.

### **Sunday, Wellington to Mount Stewart**

The trail east of **Wellington** is the longest straight section in the province. Straight sections are rare because in the original railway construction contract, the contractor was paid by the mile and the route was not specified. Thus going around the hills and other obstacles was more lucrative in two ways for the contractor. It leaves us with a very interesting trail.

The section passes through the Miscouche swamp, as it is locally known. It is a peaceful woodland area, rich in birdlife and varied in plant species. It is the easternmost limit of white cedar in the province. A large wetland is located in the centre, east of St. Nicholas road. It is called **Muddy Creek** and contains deep water beside the trail. Beaver have made several attempts to fill the large concrete culvert under the trail but water levels are now controlled by a beaver-baffler which runs through the culvert. Water and marsh birds are plentiful. Willow trees and marsh marigold were noted. As the trail corridor rises toward the eastern end of the stretch, it opens into farmland; the beginning of extensive potato country between here and the central hills near Breadalbane.

**Km. 100.9** - Twin spires of St. John the Baptist church are visible in **Miscouche** and nearby is the Acadian Museum. On the way into the edge of Summerside one meets an adjoining spur trail to the north, a connection into Slemmon Park. Glenn Drive, at **Linkletter Farms**, is the exit for Linkletter Provincial Park to the south.

The trail in the city passes two schools which make use of the trail and the Summerside Race Track (which does not) before passing close between homes in the west end of the city. Downtown it traverses the waterfront parallel to the main roads. The **Summerside Railway Station** has been transformed into the Summerside Library and features a large mural of rail times on its west wall. The Trans Canada Trail monument unveiled a couple of years ago stands beside the trail. Summerside is the home of the Trans Canada Trail concept because it was here at the Loyalist Inn in June, 1992, that the Confederation Trail was established as a legacy of Canada 125. Just east of downtown is the yard the railway used to assemble trains.

In the east end of the city, formerly **Wilmot**, there is a connection to the Fox Run Trail to Rotary Friendship Park in the north side of the city. Also in the Wilmot area is a connection to the College of Piping. Don't be surprised to meet a piper on the trail!

**Km. 113.7 - Traveller's Rest** is at the next road crossing, originally the name of a public house. A photograph has survived of one of the railway "flag" stations—a small shelter where trains only stopped if a flag signal was put out for them. It could easily be replicated as a feature for the area. Just beyond that point is the area of the Summerside well field, near an extensive agricultural region. This is open country, with a few hedgerows. The latter have been diminishing unfortunately due to the use of larger agricultural equipment and fewer small farms.

**Km. 117.4** - Near **New Annan** the trail passes between two creeks which it follows across the highway. White campion and goat's beard (where goldfinches feed) species occur on the edge. North of the trail, up route 106, a marsh has been designed to treat waste water from Cavendish Farms. A small stream and wetland at the head of the Barbara Weit River are near the trail as one approaches the province's second grain elevator. Beside it is Island Fertilizer, formerly owned by the Scales family who are prominent in the history of the province, particularly in South Freetown.

Lupins, dogbane, lupin, clovers and wild rose are found on the way into **Kensington**. The town is located around the junction of five roads originally known as Barrett's Cross, an important railway town. The stone station was designed by architect C.B. Chappell and built in 1905 by M.F. Schurman & Co. which was first established in this area. The station is now a National Historic Site and a diesel engine and caboose are located nearby.

St. Marks Anglican Church sits beside the trail as it passes out of the downtown. The church was designed by W.C. Harris and consecrated in 1868.

**Km. 123.7** - Crossing route 2, we are beside a horse paddock as the trail moves again into potato land, sometimes bordered by hedgerows but often with long vistas. A swallowtail butterfly floats amid hay-scented ferns and solomon's seal along the edge. Large open field areas which alternate between potatoes and grain crops line both sides from here to Emerald. There is a distant view of Summerfield Church to the northeast.

**Km. 126.0** - A trestle crossed the Blue Shank Road until it was removed a few years ago, resulting in a level crossing for the trail. The Wilmot River is a short distance east with elevated vistas north and south. This is a fishing spot and with open water and bordering trees, and should be a good vantage point for birding. Just down stream, the historic community of Mill Valley was named for the presence of several water-driven mills but little remains today.

Across a barely-discernable divide, the trail enters the Dunk River watershed as it approaches Freetown. This is the 4th largest watershed in the province. Manitoba maple, also known as box elder are seen along the trail and during migration, Canada geese can be found in the fields.

**Km. 131.1** - Freetown was settled by United Empire Loyalists and the name Freetown speaks of their attitudes toward the land question on PEI in the mid-late 1800s. A small trail bridge over the North Brook tributary to the Dunk is known locally as Black Bridge. Milkweed is found in the area; the plant needed by the Monarch Butterfly for food and its very bitter taste which makes them unappetizing to birds. Culvert ends beside the trail indicate a construction date of 1926.

Emerald Junction is in Prince County while the station area and community are in Queens. **Emerald** was originally known as "County Line". The junction was built in 1884 when a branch line was constructed to connect the railway to the iceboat service operating out of Cape Traverse. The Lansdowne Hotel served those waiting for transportation. The federal government took over the iceboat service as the essential winter link to the mainland at that time. The railway terminus changed in 1917 when the port at Borden was completed, now the terminus of the branch trail from Emerald. Emerald station has been repaired and is awaiting investment for the future. In train times there were at least three tracks out front and the "Boat Train" or the "Tignish Flier" might be waiting for connections. Train progress was reported regularly on CFCY.

**Shelters located at km. 96.9, 100.9, 108.9, 111.6, 117.2, 126.2, 133.7, 136.6**

East of Emerald the landscape begins to change as trail moves toward uplands. Hedgerows contain apple, showy and American mountain ash, beaked hazelnut and a variety of berries. Reindeer lichen can be found on the ground. The trail follows the

Dunk River and more woodland is in evidence. Agriculture changes with the terrain with more beef and dairy herds and crops other than potatoes.

**Km. 138.8 - Breadalbane**, originally called Holmes Mills, marks the real change to the central hill country. The hollows beside the trail get deeper and the surrounding tree-covered hills higher. A restored water-driven mill is preserved at the head of Breadalbane Pond in the community.

This is hardwood country with many woodlots of maple and birch and beech interspersed with views of layers of hills receding into the distance. Early in a spring morning this can be a photographers delight as the sun illuminates layers of landscape as it burns off the rising mists. If you happen to see a small round hole in the trail bed, about 2+ inches in diameter, it is likely home to an eastern chipmunk.

**Km. 147.4 - Fredericton Station** is tucked quietly into this landscape. The old station sits sadly beside the trail without much purpose but is surprisingly sturdy yet. Deep woods, hedgerow and open fields are interspersed over this section through the hills and hollows of central Queens. This is the rural landscape that showcases the many shades of green of PEI that attract our visitors. One is in the countryside, yet habitation is usually visible in the distance poking through the trees. The last remaining bridge over a farm road crossing exists at **Hazel Grove**. Black foxes have been seen in the area.

**Km. 154.5** - A steel railway bridge crosses the **Hunter River** which then parallels the trail into the community. Peeper frogs make their presence known here in spring. A succession of wildflowers decorates the meadow beyond. The trail rises as it reaches the former station area in the community. A connecting trail down a steep set of steps crosses the water to the Central Queens school property. There are beaver in the stream and poplar stumps over 8" in diameter adjacent to the trail. Bagnall's Pond is visible through the trees.

Birch, maples, berry trees, a few spruce, beech, alder and willow make up the mixed edge of the trail. It is glorious in mid-fall but also in early spring when colours are fresh. Fireweed is common in disturbed soil along the edge where it is known to replace nitrogen in the soil. Apple trees are evident here and there but the orchards of earlier times are mostly gone. Closer to ground level, red-berry elder, serviceberry, raspberry, blackberry and chokecherry feed a host of birds and likely a few trail users.

The church at Hunter River stands out on the hill, high over the trail looking back to the west. Toward **Darlington**, the hollows and high built-up connections become more dramatic. It is in these areas that remnant stands of old trees remain including maple, hemlock and red spruce. One beautiful stand of large sugar maple is beside the trail. Trestles were used in earlier times to cross some of the valleys but the structures were eventually filled in to provide the high vistas offered to trail users today. The highest one in the province in this area is close to 80' above adjacent fields. Cuttings were made through the tops of some hills to reduce the elevation of the rails although these spots posed snow problems in winter. Many of the cuttings had names although not all of them have been located. Included are Lower Winsloe, Argyle, Watt's, Jewell's and Curtis cuttings. Photos exist showing trains in them with snow banks high above the cars on each side.

**Shelters: km. 149.7, 153.8, 158.5, 164.5**

Strong efforts at sustainable agriculture are being made in the province but some fields are still seen in this area ploughed down the slopes rather than across. Croplands in the area are generally in either grain or potatoes.

Milkweed is found here and in scattered clumps along the trail through central Queens and eastern Prince counties. It is known almost exclusively along the trail in PEI.

**Km. 169.7** - Approaching Milton is the first of two bridges over tributaries to the North River. This one, with its new shelter, is one of the interpretation sites using the **Discovery Program** panels of the Trans Canada Trail. Native upland trees, plants, birds and animals are included in the program. Wild animal scat is consistently evident on the trail and those who travel quietly or early or late in the day may be rewarded by a glimpse.

The bridge, built in 1945 (if you lean over the side, it is etched into the face of the abutment) crosses one of the cold-water streams that make ideal habitat for fish. They are fed by ground-water and kept cool by overhanging branches all summer. For the same reasons they are productive spawning areas.

The second bridge, this one with a concrete deck, was built in 1950 and is just a short distance from Route 248 in **Milton**. Three trail parking areas (Milton, Hunter River and Fredericton) were constructed in 2001, the start of an on-going program.

**Km. 170.8** - From the trail parking area at **Milton** (formerly Milton Station), the trail follows hedgerows as it finds its way into the edges of the capital city. A 70' high vista overlooks the upper North River wetlands at Coles Creek. Below on the south side can be seen abutments of a former bridge close to stream level. The railway wound into the woodland before the high crossing was built to get down to that level and a little further on, a former junction can be distinguished joining the south side of the trail. It appears to be narrow, indicating abandonment in the 1920s before the entire trail bed was widened for standard-gage track.

**Km. 176.7** - A fireman's training area is on the left before reaching **Winsloe**, one of the major areas amalgamated into the city about 1995. The trail climbs steeply toward the junction at **Royalty** offering views back over the community from the top. Once a very busy area with trains arriving from both ends of the Island several times daily, it is now a quiet path requiring a decision to turn right into the city, about 8 km to downtown, or left to continue toward the east end of the Island. The large station from this point still exists, now located beside route 2 near Springvale.

Parking is available off the Brackley Point Road beside the paved road parallel to the trail.

East of the junction, dogbane lines trail edges in season in late June, scenting the air with a heavy perfume. This is upland on the edge of the city with some industry penetrating the countryside amid dairy farms. A mix of hardwood and softwood remain in hedgerows and woodlots providing a comfortable backdrop for the trail. Sphinx moths can be seen in blossoms along the corridor like miniature humming birds, for which they might be mistaken. The trail crosses the **Winter River** and one of its tributaries in the area of the Charlottetown well field.

Emerging from the woods, the community of **York** is visible in the distance. In this area, garter snakes are seen on trail edges on warm days, especially in the early fall.

**Km. 182.9** - York is a farming community known for Vessey's Seed Co. The former station area is vacant but the derelict station is located on an adjacent property, an opportunity for an entrepreneur. The potato warehouse built of cinder block on the right is very old.

**Shelters located at km. 167.9, 176.2, 182.0**

A little further on, a pair of culvert ends denote a construction date of 1928.

Wooded upland predominates in much of this district with the mix of animal species that it supports. Included are red fox and their less common black phase, red squirrel, striped skunk, raccoon, ruffed grouse and smaller rodents although some are infrequently seen on the trail in daytime. Grouse are more commonly spotted in spring

mating season. The black scat noted here and there on the surface is certainly evidence of mammal presence.

**Km. 190.4** - Oak trees are common along the trail approaching **Bedford** (formerly Bedford Station—the stopping point for trains delivering visitors to north shore hotels a century ago—imagine being picked up here by horse-drawn coaches). This road (Route 6) is still a major access to Stanhope.

**Km 191.2** - Two adjacent peat bogs on the north side are a surprise in this predominantly upland area and an adjacent picnic shelter provides a pleasant resting spot. Discovery panels have been added, overlooking the bog.

A convenient campground is located on the left approaching **Tracadie Cross**. At the former station area, near the highway crossing, the community has developed a heritage trail leading north into the heart of Grand Tracadie, a kilometer away. This is an area of Scottish heritage of the Glenaladale settlers and their roots remain strong.

Beyond **Tracadie** as the trail crosses Route 2, it parallels the Hillsborough River and some of the marshes at its edge. The first section is wooded with a few small fields. It descends to just above river level near **Scotchfort**, opposite the First Nation Reserve. The Canadian Heritage River monument sits in a highway viewpoint just above the trail. It was designated in 1997, the first river on PEI to be so recognized.

From here to Mount Stewart, marshland is on one or both sides. The trail has been known to be submerged in very high tides. Marsh birds like red-winged blackbirds are heard all summer long and muskrat trails can be found into the marsh on either side, especially in the early morning when still wet. Ducks nest in the area and may be seen overhead or in some of the marsh waterways. Some drowned trees are in evidence in the eastern end of this section.

**Km. 204.0 - Mount Stewart** was a very busy railway town with daily freights and passenger trains going to and from Charlottetown, Souris, Georgetown and Murray Harbour. It was a bustling centre of commerce for a large area on both sides of the county line but the demise of the industry dealt a heavy blow. It is now a quiet bedroom town that is beginning to stir in response to tourism.

The trail meets in Mt. Stewart from four directions and the station area now contains an Interpretive Centre with washrooms. Trailside Café has developed connecting loop trails to take advantage of accessible country roads. There are eagles in the area and an eagle-feeding station is being contemplated just across the trail bridge on the up-river side.

Ducks Unlimited has created ponds in the wetland just east of the community and much of the riverside marsh is being considered for a Wildlife Management Area. It is hoped that will bring additional access to the marsh and wildlife viewing areas. Osprey and beaver have been seen at Bambrick Creek near **St. Andrews**. A path connects to the site which memorializes Angus MacEachern, the first Bishop in the colony. A church, monument and pioneer graveyard are readily accessible a short distance uphill.

Along this section the saltmarshes were used by the earliest French settlers for marsh hay for their livestock. Marshlands produced a ready supply whereas clearing land for agriculture was very difficult. A series of dykes have been identified that settlers built to protect their crops from high tides. They used one-way gates which permitted outflow at low tides but limited flooding of the hay from the incoming tides.

**Shelters located at km. 185.8, 191.2, 195.1, 200.4**

We stop in **Mount Stewart** and will be bused to our hotel in Charlottetown.

### **Monday, Mount Stewart to Elmira**

The river, which is a considerable distance from the trail through the marsh, swings over closer at what is known as the “S” –two tight turns in the upper wetlands.

**Km. 209.6** - In woodlands once more, the trail passes through Cherry Hill and **Douglas Station**. Just above Douglas is a significant bog. This is part of the wetland that feeds the Miracle Spring a short distance through the woods to the southeast, but it is not accessible from the trail. Grey jays are seen in this area and further east, usually in pairs. Blueberry fields are expanding in this region and some hedgerows along the trail have disappeared as an unfortunate (and illegal) result.

**Km. 215.7 - MacKinnon’s Pond** is a very pleasant oasis and popular fishing spot near Bristol. The trail crosses it on a concrete bridge. Bristol was at one time the location of the major railway station for the immediate area. Only some foundation remains can be seen in the woods in the spring near the Settlement Road.

**Km. 219.1** - Wetlands predominate as the trail arrives in **Morell**, beside a new replica station building that houses an Island Welcome Centre.

Crossing Route 2, the trail follows the **Morell River** to its mouth on St. Peter’s Bay. The longest remaining bridge (235’) on the trail crosses the river with fabulous views up the estuary and across the bay toward Greenwich. This was once a “swing” bridge, opening to allow vessels to come up to the village and the gears are still visible on the round pier under the western end. This is a salmon and trout fishing stream.

From there, the trail parallels the edge of the bay, following the headlands and coves. The brackish water supports the blue mussel fishing industry and neat rows of white buoys dot much of the bay. Long vistas down the shoreline allow shorebird watching.

**Km. 224.3** - The next cove is the mouth of the **Marie River** and another bridge which kingfishers use for fishing. The Cemetery Road crosses the trail, ending on a small peninsula where mussel mud was once collected to use for fertilizer. The railway built a short spur down to the shore for loading the mud and delivery to farms in the area. The peninsula also contains a small pond favoured for duck hunting.

**Km. 226.9** - The third bridge along the bay crosses the **Midgell River**, near the road. St. Peter’s Roman Catholic Church has been visible for much of the trek up the edge of the bay. The trail skirts the edge of the St. Peter’s Park campground as it moves into the community. This 10 km. section is the longest stretch in the province along the water. The majority of trail is inland as railway builders sought to reduce costs by avoiding expensive bridge projects.

**Shelters located at km. 204.0, 206.6, 210.5, 222.2, 226.5**



St. Peter’s Bay

**Km. 230.5 - St. Peter's Bay** (originally known as Head of St. Peter's Bay) developed on both sides of the water. A recent P.E.I. Tourist Bureau is located in the former station area which supplies parking for trail users. The old railway station has been transformed into the Circle Club for senior citizens. The head of the bay is also the mouth of the St. Peter's River and a footbridge across the river above the highway bridge makes an excellent shore- and water-bird watching area. It connects to a new commercial development near the fire station. An adjoining trail will eventually connect to the Greenwich peninsula and the adjunct to the PEI National Park.

The trail crosses the St. Peter's River on an elevated bridge as it proceeds inland. Watch for marsh marigold in the ditches and wet woodlands in the early spring.

Crossing Route 2 once again at Five Houses, the trail moves into deep woodland. **Cow Creek** is an extensive wetland featuring a beaver house amid drowned trees. Watch for ducks and woodpeckers. Further along is a trail shelter beside a spring used by the steam trains. The square concrete-pad foundation indicates a former water tower. Watch for ruffed grouse as you proceed through mixed woodlands, especially in spring.

**Km. 242.9** - Larkin's Pond, between **Selkirk** and **St. Charles**, is one of the larger bodies of fresh water in the province. It was created by a dam on the Naufrage River. Geese and ducks and perhaps a loon may be seen here and it is a popular resting spot. Some wood duck boxes are mounted at water's edge. Watch also for northern parula warblers in the low trees along the bank of the trail.

**Km. 248.9 - Bear River** was named for the black bears found in the area a century ago but the last one was caught in the 1920s.

Spectacular hardwood land is a feature of the stretch from Bear River to Harmony.

Maples predominate and the ideal trail season is the middle of September. With upland habitat comes upland species of birds and animals. Owls have been seen along this section of trail and lots of ruffed grouse.

Not far from Bear River, trail bisects a peat bog and passes a blueberry barren. More hardwood is found near **New Zealand**, a community named in the middle of the 19th century when settlers were leaving P.E.I. for the south Pacific islands.

**Km. 257.6 - Harmony Junction** was originally a turning point on the railway at the head of the Souris River for the section down to the Town of Souris. It is now a beautiful branch line through the Grant Road Woodlot and overlooking the Souris River. The section east to Elmira was added in 1912. A piped aquifer is located beside the trail and flows most of the year as long as groundwater levels are high. It was used to refill steam trains after making the grade up from Souris. **McVarish's Pond** is adjacent to the trail at the junction and ducks are found here. A parking area built beside the road containing a trail information plaza. The project is supported by the community and features symbol and location signage to help direct travelers to accommodation and food services. Townshend Woodlot, a provincial natural area is located north on the Souris Line Road.

The New Harmony Road to the south and the Glen Road to the north, both Scenic Heritage Roads, are close by the intersection of the trail with Route 304 at New Harmony.

**Fountain Head Spring** is just off the trail at the next intersection with a clay road. This spring and others feed an extensive wetland. Water here is flowing east and north to North Lake Creek.

**Shelters located at km. 230.5, 236.4, 242.9, 250.7, 257.4**

Wetlands and mixed woods alternate from here to the end of the route. Wood harvesting is important to the area and most woodlots are accessible from the Tarantum Road which parallels the trail a short distance to the south.

**Km. 265.4** - At **East Baltic**, Dixon's Pond is just north of the trail but not visible in summer. A trail project in future will thin brush on that side. This is where you can exit for Red Point or Basin Head to the South or Baltic Bog to the north.

At **Alder Creek** the trail is high above a stream valley and in a couple of seasons, beavers blocked the culvert under the trail, creating an extensive new lake but at the same time threatening to wash out a half kilometer of trail bed.

**Km. 273.4 - Elmira** is the end of the line although history records one train that did not quite stop there and ended up across the highway. The station is restored as a Railway Museum, a fitting end to the trail. Rails are still in place for about 1 km including a "T" junction used for turning the engines. A miniature railway that carries passengers was developed in woodland adjacent to the station in 2003 for a real train experience and an extensive model railway operates in one of the freight sheds. Elmira is about 9 km from East Point.

**Shelters located at km. 261.6, 267.2, 273.4**



Facing west from the end of the trail, Elmira

**THE FINISH LINE!!!**

Congratulations on completing the **Tip to Tip for Africa!**

**Trail Notes by Doug Murray of Island Trails**