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Export date: Fri Oct 30 7:57:00 2026 / +0000 GMT

Dufferin Hi-Land Bruce Trail Day draws crowd of hundreds to celebrate conservation and biodiversity

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LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Dufferin Hi-Land Bruce Trail Club's 2026 Bruce Trail Day brought people to Splitrock Narrows Nature Reserve on Oct. 4, giving families, hikers and community members an opportunity to explore the local trail and learn more about the natural environment.

Vice President and event coordinator Lorraine Campbell said that the club was pleased with the turnout, despite the rainy conditions that started the day.

?We had about 300 people come out, and they were fantastic,? she said. ?They were such a diverse group of people. We had families, we had seniors, we had young people. We had lots and lots of great representation from the community.?

The weather quickly cleared, allowing visitors to take advantage of the activities throughout the day. The turnout included families, seniors and young people, with organizers pleased by the diversity of visitors who came out to experience Splitrock Narrows.

A major goal of this year's event was to introduce more people to the Bruce Trail and encourage new visitors to explore the area. The approximately 2.5-kilometre loop through Splitrock Narrows provided an accessible route showcasing the area's varied landscape, including forests, open fields, cliffs and natural crevices.

Music was a major part of the day, with visitors able to hear local musicians as they travelled along the trail.

A variety of musical performances provided entertainment throughout the property. Families also took part in a children's music circle, which featured singing and rhythm instruments.

Campbell said the music and kids event were very well received by guests, who were extra appreciative of the diverse music lineup.

?The children's music circle was a lot of fun,? she said. ?I think they had about 15 kids in the children's music circle, and both adults and kids loved the rhythm instruments and loved singing along. We tried to have a lot of different types of music, like we had the Celtic Orchestra and the clarinetist and more, and the people seem to really appreciate that diversity.?

Other activities highlighted the conservation work connected to the Bruce Trail.

A biodiversity hike introduced participants to the natural features and species found throughout the property, while a demonstration at the club's seed orchard highlighted efforts to regenerate native species. The orchard is being used to help establish species such as American chestnut and milkweed for future planting.

?The other element that was successful was the biodiversity aspect,? Campbell said. ?There was an organized biodiversity hike that went through, and we had I think 10 people on that, and then there was also the seed orchard presentation. We got a bunch of new memberships.?

The free barbecue was also well attended, while the event resulted in new club memberships and strong merchandise sales.

For many visitors, the day offered more than simply a hike, combining recreation, music, family activities and conservation education while showcasing one of the Dufferin Hi-Land Bruce Trail Club's key properties.

For more information about upcoming events, go to: dufferinbrucetrailclub.org