

The South Huron Trail

Exeter, Ontario



Health • Recreation • Nature

Welcome to Exeter's South Huron Trail
– Beautiful in all the seasons

The South Huron Trail

The South Huron Trail is an eight-kilometre, all-season trail that winds through the scenic Ausable River Valley. This accessible trail links MacNaughton Park in Exeter, Ontario and Morrison Dam Conservation Area (MDCA), at 71108 Morrison Line, just two kilometres (km) east of Exeter. The South Huron Trail combines the MacNaughton-Morrison and MDCA trail sections.

Thanks to trail loops of different lengths (2 km, 4 km, or 8 km), you can spend 20 minutes or two hours enjoying nature.

The trail is home to many community events and charitable fundraisers including the South Huron Trail Run, which includes competitive and fun runs and attracts people from Canada and the United States.



Morrison Dam
Conservation Area

Trail Markers

There are 40 trail markers placed every 200 metres along the trail for eight kilometres. The trail marker locations are on the maps in this brochure. These markers are helpful ways to stay aware of where you are on the trail. You may also use those trail markers to help find plants and sites of interest on your tour. The MacNaughton Park kiosk marker is '0.0 metres' and the numbers increase from there as it loops around the trail to the 8.0 kilometre (km) marker. The trail marking posts start at MacNaughton Park, at 62 MacNaughton Drive, in Exeter, and are located along the trail on the south side of the river, through Morrison Dam Conservation Area to the east end of the trails and back to MacNaughton Park on the north side of Morrison Reservoir and the Ausable River.



Washrooms

There are privies located south of Morrison Reservoir (Morrison Lake), along the Morrison Dam Conservation Area Section of the Trail. These restrooms are marked on the map in this brochure. Washrooms in MacNaughton Park are available seasonally.



MacNaughton-Morrison Trail

The MacNaughton-Morrison Section of the South Huron Trail passes through towering hardwood and pine forests, skirts along the Ausable River, and gives a bird's eye view of the river valley at several lookouts. This all-season trail is four kilometres long.

The 75-metre Stirling Bridge spans the Ausable River mid-way between MacNaughton Park and Morrison Dam. Lookouts, including the tree-top boardwalk, provide scenic vistas of the forest, river valley, or golf course. Benches allow you to pause and enjoy the sights and sounds of nature. Education kiosks identify the birds and animals that call the corridor home.



Location of MacNaughton Park

MacNaughton Park in Exeter, Ontario is where you will find the start of the MacNaughton-Morrison Trail. The park is located at 62 MacNaughton Drive. A parking lot is located at the end of Hill Street, near these coordinates:

N 43° 21' 16.911"

W 81° 28' 46.338"

Morrison Dam Conservation Area Trail

Shaded, accessible nature trails surround Morrison Reservoir (Morrison Lake) for hiking, running, birdwatching, bicycling, cross-country skiing, and nature appreciation. The 30-acre lake, located two kilometres east of Exeter, is a favourite spot for family fishing. Morrison Dam Conservation Area is owned and operated by Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA).

Location of MDCA Trail

The start (or 'trailhead') of the Morrison Dam Conservation Area Section of the South Huron Trail is located at 71108 Morrison Line, RR 3 Exeter, near these coordinates:

N 43° 21' 35.12"

W 81° 27' 27.395"

History of the South Huron Trail

The MacNaughton-Morrison Section of the South Huron Trail was constructed between 2002 and 2004 through a community partnership that included Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA); Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation; Exeter Lions Club; Municipality of South Huron; local landowners; and other donors, including service organizations, businesses, and individual people. Check out the entrance kiosks for logos of some of the funding partners.



Stirling Bridge

Stirling Bridge was created with funding from Ontario Trillium Foundation and a family memorial donation. The Stirling Bridge name comes from Scottish history and was featured in the movie Braveheart.

The former Ausable River Conservation Authority, Ontario's first conservation authority, was formed in 1946. Its original mandate was the protection of life and property from flooding and that remains a key mandate of Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority today. ABCA owns more than 9,500 acres of land in the watershed for conservation purposes.

Construction of Morrison Dam and Morrison Reservoir began in 1956 and was completed by 1959. The dam was built to ensure water supply for the former Exeter Canning factory. Although the dam is not used for that purpose now, the conservation area has become a thriving lake ecosystem. Morrison Reservoir is also known as Morrison Lake. Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority continues to run and maintain the dam.

Although no formal attendance records are kept, it is estimated that thousands of people use the conservation area for recreation annually with hiking and fishing as the main activities. Please be sure to be aware of Ontario fishing regulations and follow those rules.

Flora and Fauna

The South Huron Trail is a great place to find and learn about flora (plants and trees) and fauna (birds and other animals).

The South Huron Trail offers excellent habitat because it provides three essential elements for wildlife – food, water, and shelter. Check out the education kiosks along the trail to find out more.

The South Huron Trail is within the Ausable River Valley. The headwaters are near Staffa and the river enters Lake Huron at Port Franks. The variety of aquatic life makes the Ausable River one of the richest watersheds of its size in Canada.

The river, trees, birds, and wildlife, along the South Huron Trail, make this an ideal setting for a nature trail. It's also one of the best places to meet the area's distinctive white squirrels. You may also encounter beavers and other animals.

The trail provides health, recreational, and social benefits and also nature appreciation.



White Squirrel

Birds

The South Huron Trail is a great place to see or hear a number of bird species. They include:

Blue Jay

Eastern Screech Owl

Great Blue Heron

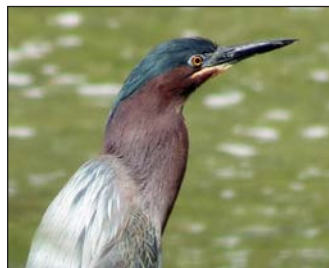
Green Heron

Northern Oriole

Red-winged blackbird

Rose-breasted Grosbeak

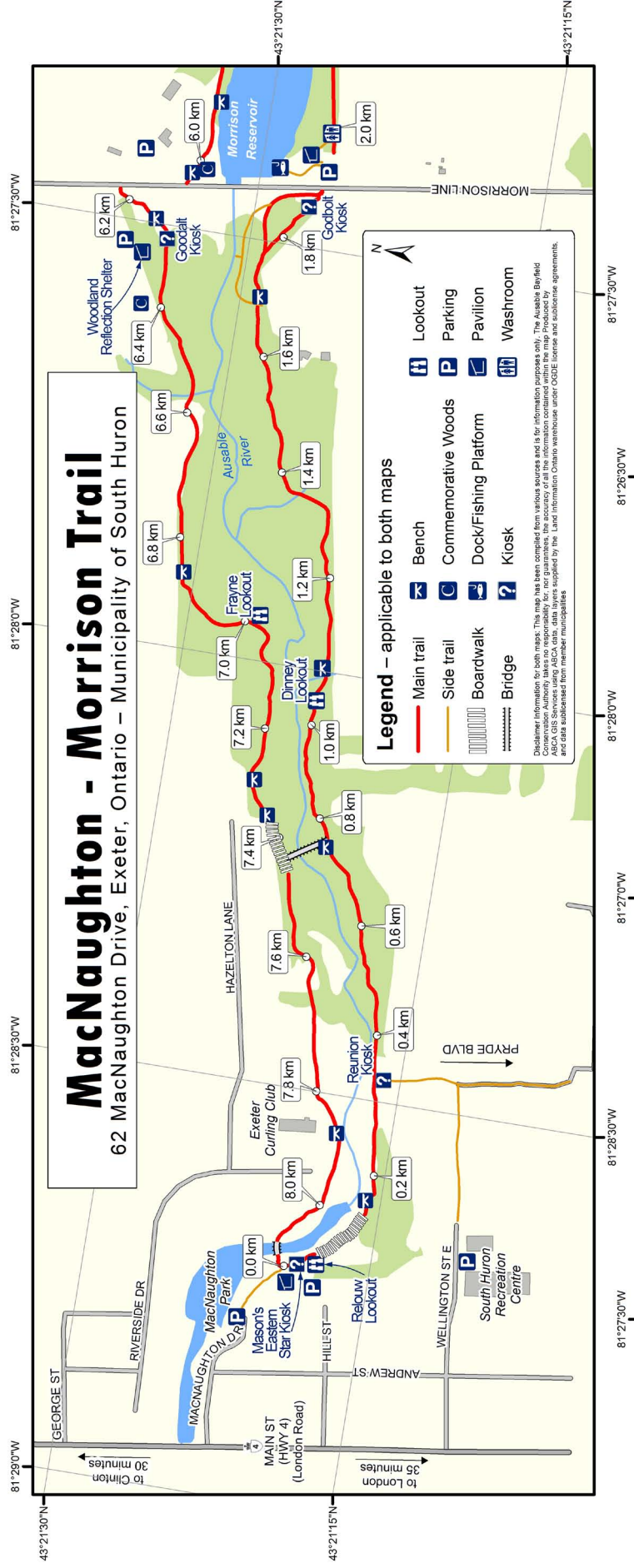
Warblers

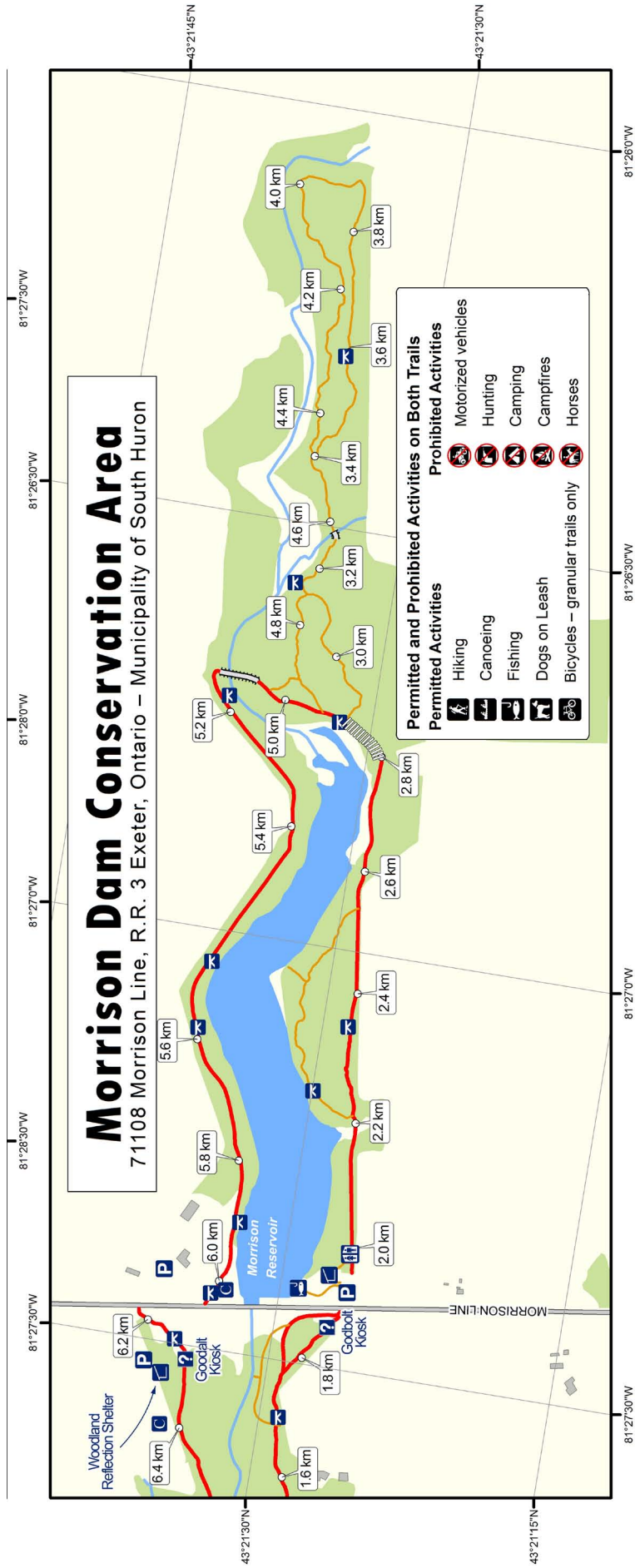


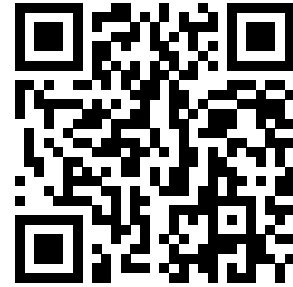
Green Heron



Record birds you saw on trail:







South Huron Trail • 62 MacNaughton Drive • Exeter, Ontario
Celebrating Ten Years • 2004 to 2014 ... and beyond!

Contacts:

Ausable Bayfield Conservation • 519-235-2610 • Toll-free: 1-888-286-2610
 E-mail: info@abca.on.ca

Websites:

Ausable Bayfield Conservation: abca.on.ca Municipality of South Huron:
southhuron.ca

*municipal.southhuron.ca/trails • abca.on.ca/page.php?page=south-huron-trail
southhurontrail.com*

Most of the MacNaughton - Morrison Trail is on private property and this project is only possible because the landowners allow the trail to cross their properties. Please show your respect by staying on the marked trails. Thank you.

This brochure is a project of the community committee for the 2014
 Tenth Anniversary of the MacNaughton-Morrison Section of the South Huron Trail

Please keep this brochure or pass it on!
That helps to save paper, save money, and reduce waste.

Photos courtesy Bonnie Sitter, David Bishop, Jim O'Toole, Ausable Bayfield Conservation

Many thanks to the Exeter Lions Club for printing of this brochure.

Woodlands

Trees you may find along the South Huron Trail include hardwood forests, plantations, and valleyland trees. Tree species here include:



Basswood
Beech and Blue Beech
Black Cherry
Black Maple
Hemlock
Ironwood
White Pine



Plants

You may find wildflowers along the trail and other plants such as Chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*). (Did you know some parts of the chokecherry are poisonous?)

Be careful of poison ivy during your hike. Hopefully most of the plants you find will be more pleasant encounters such as:

Astor/Aster (*Asteraceae*)
Blue Cohosh (*Caulophyllum giganteum*)
Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*)
False Solomon's Seal
(*Maianthemum racemosum*)
Jack-in-the-Pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*)
... and Jill-in-the-Pulpit!
Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*)
Mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*)
Red Trillium (*Trillium erectum*)
Trillium (Trillium, Wakerobin, Tri flower, Birthroot)
(Did you know that pink trilliums are just more mature white trilliums?)
Wild strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*)

At the water's edge and in the marshy areas, cattails, sedges, and rushes grow.

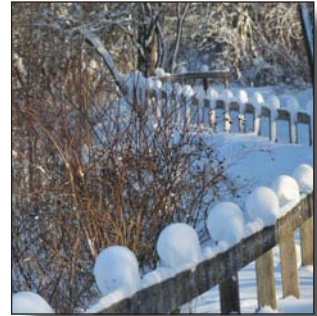


Red Trillium

Donations

We hope you enjoy the MacNaughton-Morrison and Morrison Dam Conservation Area sections of the South Huron Trail.

The South Huron Trail is maintained for your enjoyment, thanks to your donations. The trail is funded by the Exeter Lions Club, Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation, Municipality of South Huron, and community-minded citizens, businesses, and groups.



Donations to the trail can be made through the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation or online. Charitable gift receipts for income tax purposes are provided.

It took more than half a million dollars to create the MacNaughton-Morrison Section of the South Huron Trail. This money was raised through community donations and in-kind contributions. Continued fundraising is needed to maintain the trail. Donate now or find out how you can support fundraising efforts so people can continue to enjoy the health, recreational, social, and economic benefits of this accessible trail.

Enjoy the Woodland Reflection Shelter pavilion, shown on the map, near the trail entrance off Morrison Line. This is a place to reflect, enjoy nature, and remember loved ones.

South Huron Trail Mobile

The South Huron Trail Mobile was created in 2006, thanks to a donation from the family of the late Gordon Strang. The Trail Mobile gives people with limited mobility the chance to experience nature along the trail. There is no charge. Continued public donations make it possible for this service to continue.



This modified electric golf cart is driven by volunteer drivers and gives people who could not otherwise walk the trail the opportunity to experience it. Contact Ausable Bayfield Conservation at **519-235-2610** or toll-free at **1-888-286-2610** to book your ride. (Rides are subject to weather and volunteer availability).

Trail Rules and Etiquette

Trail rules are in place for protection and enjoyment of you and your fellow users of this multi-use trail. These rules must be followed. Multiple fines can be enforced to anyone who does not.

Motorized vehicles (except wheelchairs, etc.) are *not* permitted.

If you have a dog on the trail, you must keep the dog on a leash, under control, and clean up after your dog.

Please see signs for uses that are permitted and prohibited. Check the entrance sign boards at the entrance kiosks to confirm permitted uses.

For your safety, the safety of all trail users, and to protect land and water, we also ask you to follow the trail etiquette.

- Promote safe and responsible trail use.
- Be courteous to others.
- Share the trail. Keep on the right, pass on left.
- Be a safe cyclist. Cycle slowly, give right-of-way to hikers, use a bicycle bell to warn hikers, be cautious at curves, and wear a helmet.
- Stay on the trail and respect neighbouring landowners.
- Be a friend of the environment. Enjoy the plants, trees, and wildlife but leave them for others to enjoy.
- Know the safety rules and wear appropriate equipment for your preferred trail activity.
- Be careful during wet and icy conditions.
- Keep the trail a pleasant place to visit. Don't litter.

Please report vandalism and incidents to the
Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA)
at **519-235-2610**
or toll-free **1-888-286-2610**.

