

## Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing coming to North Hastings



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By Chris Drost

While most are aware of the improvements made to the trails in Eagles Nest Park this past year, some may not be aware that work was also completed at McGeachie Conservation Area and at The Gut. Further to these improvements, Hastings Destination Trails Inc. is excited to announce that cross-country ski and snowshoe trails at McGeachie Conservation Area are now open to the public.

Winter sports have become especially important in this year when other types of indoor experiences have been curtailed. "People understand the importance of getting outside, particularly this year," says chair of HDTI, Cathy Trimble. The group has been working in tandem with its partners, Crowe Valley Conservation Area (owners of the property at McGeachie) and the Township of Limerick, to get things ready to go this month.

There will be eight kilometres of groomed double track for cross-country skiing and in a different location within the conservation area, a groomed packed snowshoe trail. Parking will only be at the main parking area on North Steenburg Lake Rd. off Hwy 62, about 20 minutes south of Bancroft.

This trial project for 2021 is an opportunity to see what the experience will be like and what the level of interest will be.

In addition, HDTI is planning to host a number of events once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. This includes free family clinics in both cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. "We will be utilizing local experts for the clinics," says Trimble. Clive Emery of Trips and Trails will lead the cross-country ski clinic and well-known runner and snowshoe expert, Bernie Hogan, will lead the snowshoe clinic.

"People have been really great, very supportive about the project but it is expensive to be able to offer groomed trails. Donations to the Crowe Valley Conservation Area are most welcome. Just click on "Donate Now" from the homepage of their website [www.crowevalley.com](http://www.crowevalley.com) and a tax receipt will be generated. Suggested donations are \$15 per single use, \$75 for an individual for the winter or a winter of skiing for the entire family for \$125.

For more information about this winter recreational program visit Hastings Ski & Snowshoe Club on Facebook. All COVID-19 protocols are in place including social distancing and wearing a mask when this is not possible. If you would like to volunteer your time to the project contact Cathy Trimble at 613-332-0348.