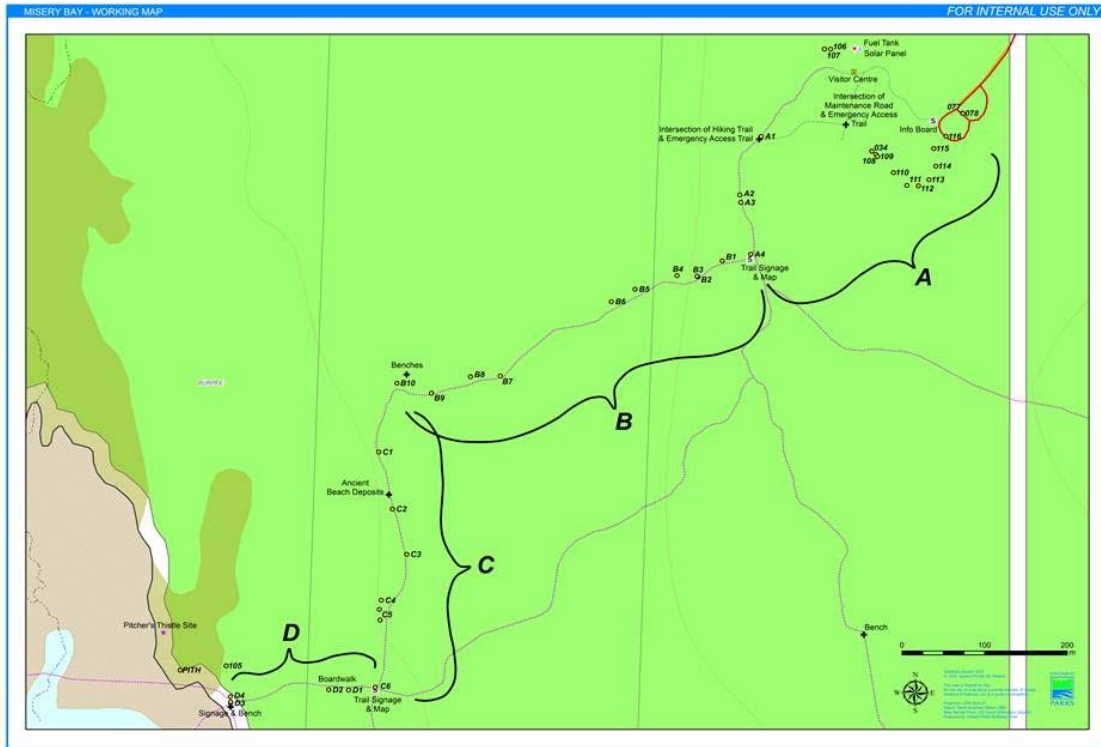


The Friends of Misery Bay (FOMB) and Ontario Parks have three major projects ongoing at Misery Bay Provincial Park. The completion of the exhibits at the Visitor Centre, the completion of the Universal Access Trail to Misery Bay and the upgrading of the Visitor Centre parking lot and access.

TRAIL TO MISERY BAY

Approvals are all in place from Ontario Parks for our upgrading the trail from the Centre to the bay. Jay Swain (our most knowledgeable and energetic foreman) and I were at Misery earlier this fall and came up with material estimates for the two main structures needed for this trail. The trail was originally planned as a *barrier free access trail*, but the very stringent guidelines and policies applicable to a government approved trail of this nature preclude it being called that. The upgraded trail, which is consistent with the park management plan, will allow the use of wheelchairs, walkers, baby buggies etc to access the beach at Misery Bay from the Visitor Centre, and will be more of a universal access trail. (of course as per park rules, no motorized vehicles, bikes, horses etc. will be allowed)

The majority of the work on the trail will involve the use of crushed alvar (limestone) to fill in holes, cover rocks etc. Edging, using white cedar, will be installed as barriers along trail to protect sensitive areas and control the spread of the crushed limestone. A team of myself, Ryan Garner, Will Kershaw (parks planner for Ontario Parks) Doug Innes (landscape architect) and Judith Jones (local botanist) walked the trail several times and identified areas of concern that had to be protected. Doug Innes gave valuable advice on how to form structures so they could be used by wheelchairs etc. The attached map details some of the planning that went into this project to get us to this point.



The two structures required are a **boardwalk** to protect the seasonal vernal pool at the approach to the old Wolf Den Trail that leads to bay. The accompanying photo shows the existing boardwalk with the Science North team (who are doing our exhibits) and Gaynor. The planned boardwalk (as approved by Will Kershaw, Doug Innes and Ryan Gardner) will be approximately 110 ft long and 4 ft wide. Built of local white cedar, it will protect this sensitive environment.



The second structure that we are very excited about, will be a **viewing platform** similar to the gazebo we built last year, but with a more open concept and a different type of roof that will protect users from the sun, but not from heavy rain. (Jay calls it a pergola and Will describes it as a ramada) This will be right at the bay and will be built in a location adjacent to the trail, that does not impact on the view of the bay by

trail users, but will allow a view of the beach, wetland, dunes etc. from the platform. (visitors will also be able to view pitcher thistles and pitcher plants from this platform. It will be fully accessible by wheelchair users.

The bulk of this work will be done next spring- but we are hoping to have some of the set up work done this fall. I will keep you posted on this. We will require a lot of volunteer help with this and I will let you know when help is needed.

VISITOR CENTRE EXHIBITS

As you all know, work, planning and fund raising have been going on for many years to complete the exhibits at the Visitor Centre. We are now at a very exciting point in this process. As you will know, our board signed an agreement/contract with Science North to head up this project and complete Phase Phase One. Darla Stoddart is heading up the Science North team and they are rocking and rolling with this project. Things are happening. Using the Don Wilkes plan as a foundation, Phase One will consist of two smart screens. The first one you will see as you walk in the door at the Visitor Centre. This smart screen will be multilayered and will give visitors an overall introduction to Misery Bay Park through short interviews with people like Will Kershaw and Judith Jones and then use the concept of 'hotspots' to introduce visitors to the park features. There will be 10 major hotspots and 10 minor hotspots. They will be shown on the aerial photo of the park (the one in use now at entrance) in the form of icons on the map. A touch of that point of the map will pop up that hotspot and give info on it. A major hotspot would be the beach at Misery Bay with the small dunes, rare plants in the background etc. A minor hotspot would be the sand dunes themselves with info on the plants that inhabit them and how they are constantly moving. At present we have a list of potential hotspots I can also tell you that at this point in time, Science North has completed the interviews with various experts, and have taken a lot of background footage. The target date for completion of Phase One is early summer of 2016.

We are meeting with Science North on Nov. 12 to discuss and finalize.

VISITOR CENTRE ACCESS and PARKING LOT

Ontario Parks has completed consultation on the proposed reconfiguration of the Visitor Centre Parking Lot and Access Road Reconfiguration. This will reorganize the existing parking lot, add a composting toilet at the edge of the parking lot and extend a separate service access to the maintenance building. Direction in the park management plan and the Parks Class EA was used to consult on the project. Comments were received and have been addressed. As part of the proposed work, an archaeologist was hired to assess and determine if any cultural heritage resources occur in the proposed extension of the access road. This corridor is close to the 5,000 year old Glacial Lake Nipissing Beach and as such may have been an area used by pre-contact peoples. Ontario parks are taking a precautionary approach here to ensure that the glacial beach deposit in the affected area does not contain cultural heritage resources or to protect them if any are found. Work is expected to proceed late this fall.

Thanks

John Diebolt and Will Kershaw
Friends of Misery

for Special Projects team for FOMB (John Diebolt, Ryan Gardner, Will Kershaw and Ted Kilpatrick

*** if anyone has any thoughts, concerns or suggestion please pass onto me at rjdiebolt@amtelecom.net*