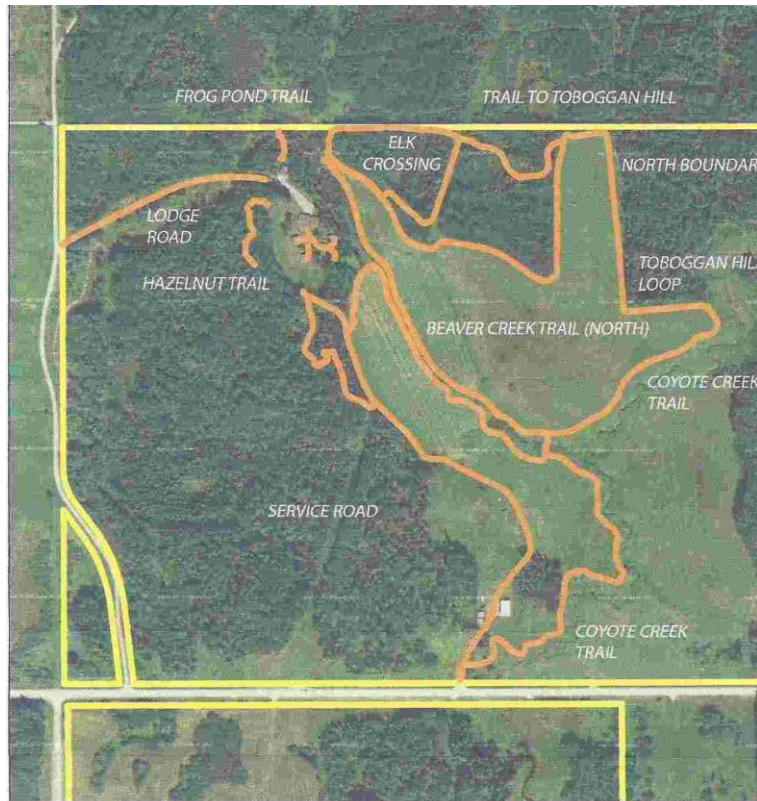


## COYOTE LAKE LODGE TRAILS 2019 - END OF YEAR NEWS



Volunteers began to build trails in 2015 following old farm trails and boundary fencelines. We added to the trail system on the countour and protected mature trees. Several trails followed Coyote and Beaver Creeks. The above map shows part of our trail system opn our north-west quarter section.

The type of surface dictates the type of activities on the trail. At the present our trail surfaces are grass which is mowed periodically. Exposed roots and stones have been removed. Some spots become muddy and rutted during wet weather. Above all trails must be safe and interesting enough that hikers wish to return periodically to enjoy the features of our trails. We continually removed wind-fall trees, and clipped trail-side weeds and spiny plants like nettles.

The year 2019 was not especially good for improving our trails. Spring weather gave us so little rain that fire bans were proclaimed: we did not want to have machinery working on dry forest floors. Then the high rainfall summer and autumn gave us mud!

Our trails are designed to be user inclusive and persons with a disability and seniors were foremost in our planning. Only foot traffic and our electric golf cart are permitted. Official companion dogs and family pets are permitted but must be on leash because we cannot guarantee protection from wild animals – even small ones such as skunks and porcupines.

### **Acknowledgements**

Volunteers, including persons with a disability and new Canadians, assisted with the initial locating of trails leading to interesting features. Leah Whyte developed the above trail map for our north-east quarter section. The loan, and then donation by David Scragg of Carmacks and Lorco, of industrial lawn mowers, skid-steer, and Gators, greatly speeded trail development since 2015.

## COYOTE LAKE LODGE TRAILS Predictions for 2020

The main goal for trail improvement is to have little side slope and solid footing for hikers. Stones and roots will be removed from new trails and then gravel will be added for equipment like TrailRiders and our golf cart. Small trail equipment like trekking poles and snowshoes will be stored in the proposed Reception Centre.

With limited funding, our priority will be to complete trailhead posts and then paint and sign the posts. Current trails will be better described to emphasise the special features. We will also use our heavy equipment to extend trails over our east- and south-quarter sections. Of special note will be the extension of our Coyote Creek Trail on our south quarter section that will connect to a Nature Conservancy of Canada trail that reaches to Coyote Lake. Our trail cameras will be installed to capture wildlife antics during day and night. Bird nest boxes will be installed along the trails and creeks (think Canada Geese on beaver ponds).

With additional funding of a few thousands of dollars, we will replace inadequate culverts with larger diameter culverts or bridges where trails cross Beaver and Coyote Creeks. Trail shelters will be built because nothing is more exciting than hiking in an unexpected rain and hail storms, or in a raging snow storm, especially if one can shelter for a rest and lunch. These shelters will also serve as wildlife blinds.

If we attract many thousands of dollars, wildlife corridors will be further re-vegetated along Coyote and Beaver Creeks with willow, poplar, and spruce. Cattle eliminated these trees and shrubs in the past so wildlife lost important corridors.

Short trails beginning at the Recreation Centre and muddy section of trails will be given highest priority for the addition of gravel. Increasing the investment in a gravel surface provides better all-weather access but periodic smoothing the surface is necessary. If we become wildly wealthy, we could invest in more expensive paved and concrete trail surfaces. This is not wise because in our forests, poplar trees can exact a toll on hard surfaces by the power of stems pushing upward.

Above all, 2020 is the year when we will encourage more people to exercise and enjoy the peace and quiet of trails.

