



## Following the Bon-ka-nah to Trout Lake

January 19, 2019

By Mark Crofts

We usually think of the Voyageur Trail as being made up of three categories ...but there are actually four. We have the “main trail” blazed white, the “side trails” blazed blue and the “loop trails” blazed yellow. In winter we have the “bonkanah”...no blazes required.

Bon-ka-nah is an Anishinabe word meaning winter trail or route. The wonderful thing about the bonkanah is that they can be wherever you want them to be...They might be direct and purposeful...say...to a pond where the fishing is good...or the bonkanah may be whimsical and wandering...say...to a high point that has intrigued you by the possibility of a wonderful view.

January 19<sup>th</sup> 2019 dawned super cold, but super bright. 19 hearty souls...VTA members, Sault Naturalists, and friends took to the bonkanah that trends north from the end of Connor Road, crosses a couple of wetlands, a small lake, a few ravines and cedar swales...and delivers us to Trout Lake about 4 kilometers one way.

Cheryl and I have an abiding interest in the ancient trails. More on that in future scribblings. We are inspired by the efforts of generations of First Nations people who have travelled the area for millennia, making a network of trails (Nastawgan). A fellow named Craig Macdonald has made a [map of the ancient trails of the Temagami area](#). A similar map could be made in our area. Meegwetch to all of them.

And by ancient trails I don't mean lost or disappeared, for the trails are out there...you just have to find them. Some of the nastawgan are now roads. No doubt parts of the Voyageur Trail are ancient nastawgan.

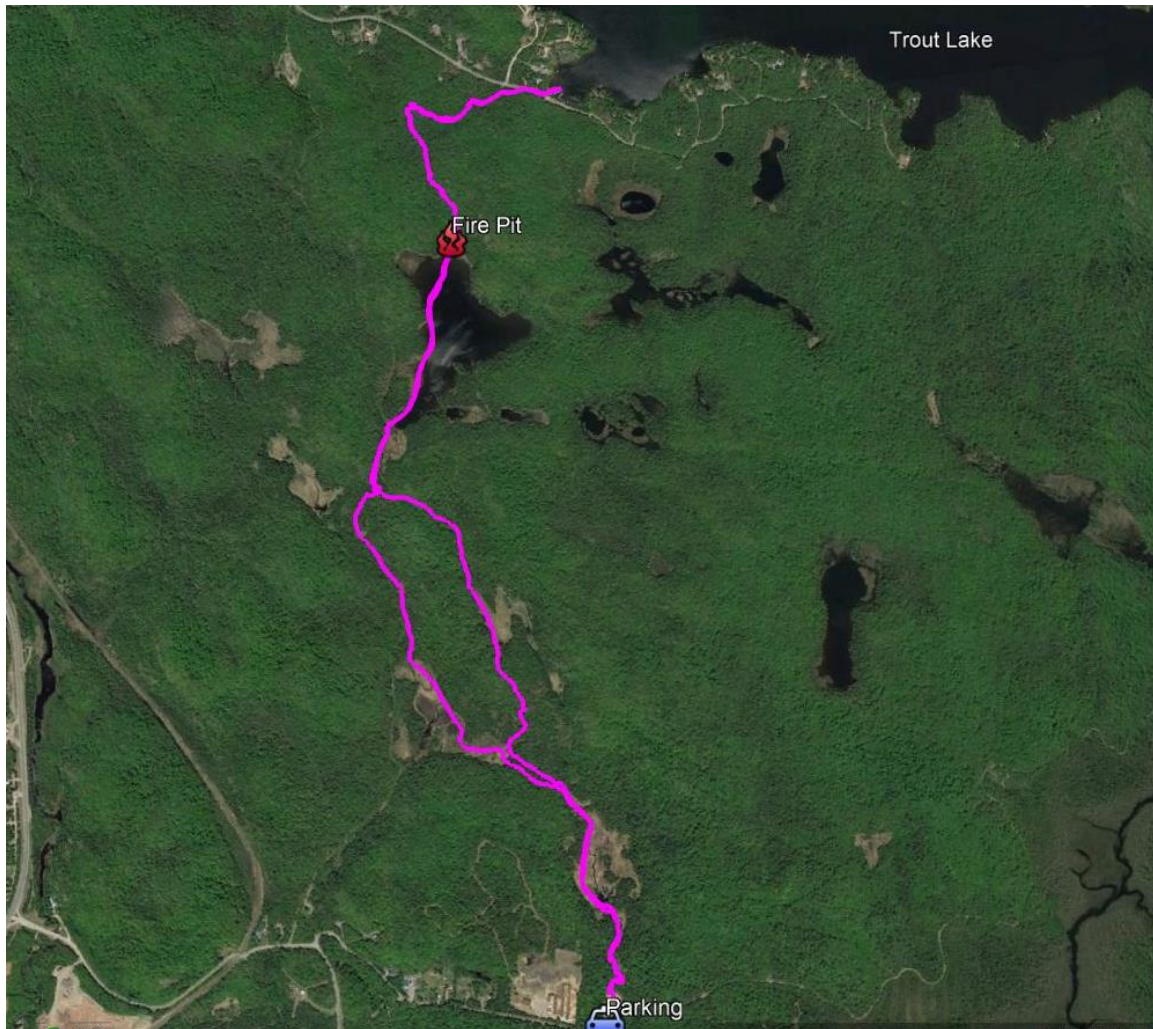
The specialized winter trails (bonkanah) get you places that you most likely would never get to in any other season. Thanks to the good work of the beaver there are countless combinations of level, open, frozen pathways to anywhere and everywhere.

And so it was the bonahkah that we followed on our Trout Lake sojourn.

Using a bit of modern technology we give you the exact location of our lunch spot and cooking/warm up fire...just click [this](#)

We also give you the route of the bonkanah...thanks to Kimlan. You'll notice a slight deviation on the return trip...and that is because Cheryl led half of the

group over another bonkanah...yet another travel possibility formed thanks to another beaver and maybe a glacier or two.



Lastly, we give you a link to some of the images taken that day...thanks to Val.  
[Click here for images.](#)

Both the Voyageurs and the Naturalists have other outings scheduled that will travel the bonkanah...you are welcome to join us. In the meantime, don your skis or snowshoes and get out there...or look at any large scale map.... and make your own bonkanah.