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Weather




TODAY:
40 PER CENT
CHANCE OF
SHOWERS




WEDNESDAY:
60 PER CENT
CHANCE OF
SHOWERS



THURSDAY:
60 PER CENT
CHANCE OF
SHOWERS



FRIDAY:
MIX OF SUN
AND CLOUD



SATURDAY:
CLOUDY
PERIODS

HIGH OF 24
LOW OF 20

HIGH OF 27
LOW OF 11

HIGH OF 17
LOW OF 2

HIGH OF 13
LOW OF 1

HIGH OF 19
LOW OF 3

Missisquoi North trail system maintenance day in Potton



THE SCOOP MABLE HASTINGS

On Saturday, May 15 from 8:30 a.m. to noon, Trish Wood, responsible for leisure, culture and community life through the Municipality of Potton and volunteers, organized a clean-up of the Missisquoi North hiking trails with four group leaders (Lucie Blanchard, Francisco Ruiz, Peter Blatter and Raymond Gagnon) forming and instructing smaller groups of enthusiastic volunteers than originally planned in consideration of the pandemic red zone classification for the area. All participants wore a mask if a two-metre distance could not be maintained, and were provided with a lunch through the Municipality of Potton prepared by Cuit-Zen as they headed off to their designated trail head to get to work!

With Covid regulations at the forefront, the following guidelines were followed: symptomatic persons

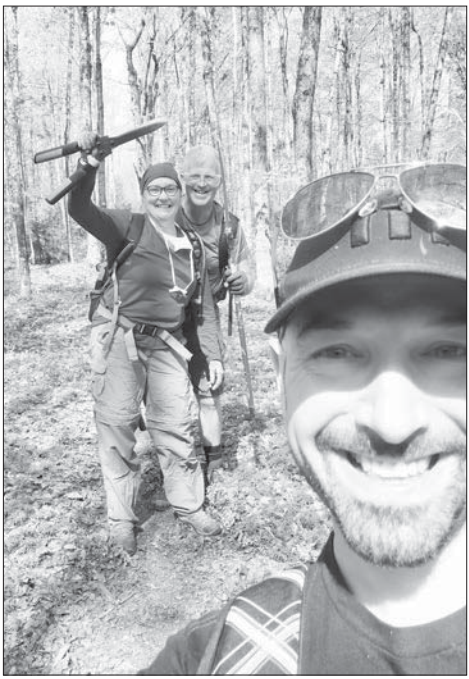
were advised not to attend, a distance of two meters had to be respected at all times, masks, it was recommended not to share tools and carpooling was discouraged. Participants were also given a list of what to bring and this included: a backpack, plenty of water, a cell phone, insect repellent, rain gear, sturdy walking or hiking shoes and of course, a smile! Those with pruning sheers, hand saws and other tools were encouraged to bring them to use.

The trails worked on included: Sentier Village/Montagne that extends 9.5km from West Hill road (near Parc Andre Gagnon) to Fullerton Pond, Owl's Head area including the Abenakis/Masonic (approx. 2km) and Chalet, L'Echappee/Panorama trails (approx. 4km).

For volunteer Francisco Ruiz, who is now recognized by many for his devotion and hard work in the maintenance of the trails, seeing so many volunteers gathered for an event like the one held on May 15 was encouraging.

"I started working on the trail system in Potton in 2009," said Ruiz. "I assisted the Missisquoi North communities of Eastman, Saint-Etienne-de-Bolton, Bolton Est with their trail systems through 2010. In 2012 I started developing the Owl's Head trails and completed the last one in 2014," he added.

Ruiz is involved in volunteering with the Sentier de L'Estrie, the Ruiter Valley Land Trust and the Appalachian



PHOTOS COURTESY
Municipal Councillor, Jason Ball

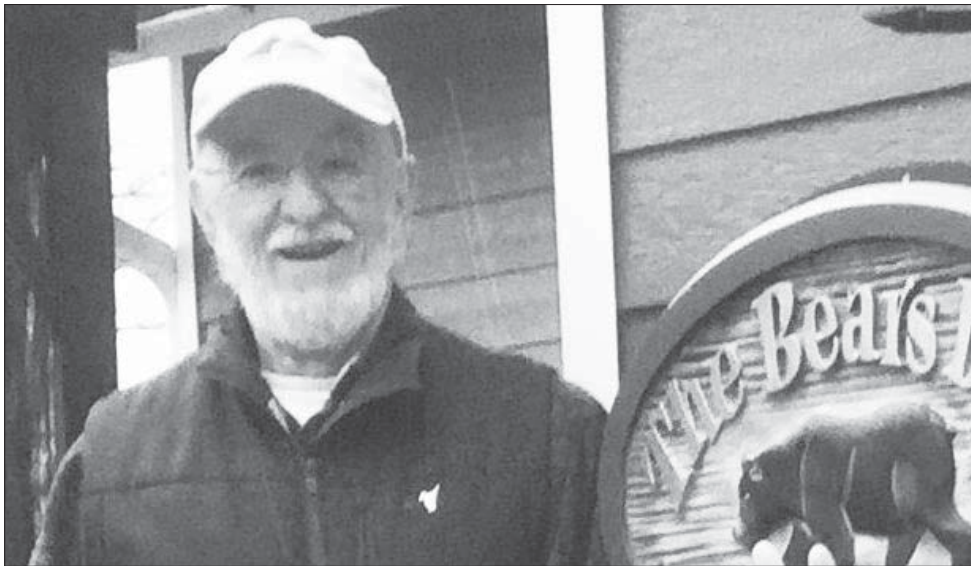
Corridor as a volunteer patroller. Ruiz has also been a member of the Board of Directors for PENS (Park Environment Nature) Sutton, where he's volunteered for several years.

When asked why he has devoted his volunteer time in this way, Ruiz simply quoted a favourite "quote of the day:" "As winter lifts its shawl in the forests, nature allows us to clear the pathways so we can forest bathe."

Ruiz also worked alongside Raymond Gagnon and Peter Blatter this winter in organizing the 9km snowshoeing trail that extends from Owl's Head Chalet to the golf course and around the area.

The impressive number of other volunteers who gathered alongside Ruiz, Gagnon and Blatter to partake in the May 15 trail maintenance day and clean up signifies that like Ruiz, many "Pottoneers" appreciate the opportunity to maintain and make ready the trails that welcome both local and tourists to an area of great beauty instilling a source of immense pride for local residents.

If you find yourself interested in "forest bathing" this summer, Potton and surrounding areas offer some beautiful, well-maintained areas in which to do so. Visit www.potton.ca for more information.



Francisco (Frank) Ruiz

Ben by Daniel Shelton

