

Salt Marsh Trail & Shearwater Flyer

Active Transportation Corridor

Map and Trail Guide

About The Corridor

Stretching from West Lawrencetown Road to Shearwater, this rail trail will eventually penetrate to the Dartmouth-Halifax ferry via the Dartmouth Harbourfront trail. In addition to its potential as a transportation corridor, it passes through seemingly remote bog land and an outstanding salt marsh.

- ✓ Park hours dawn to dusk
- ✓ Dogs must be on leash
- ✓ Stay on the trail
- ✓ Be considerate
- ✓ No firearms
- ✓ No motorized vehicles except ATVs on Shearwater Flyer
- ✓ Swim carefully
- ✓ Bikes permitted throughout corridor

Trail Descriptions

Salt Marsh Trail - 6.5 km

Hurricane Juan caused extensive damage in 2003; however, repairs have been made to the trail and it is still enjoyed by thousands of people every year.

The Salt Marsh Trail is part of the abandoned Musquodoboit railroad that has been transformed into a part of the Trans Canada Trail. The trail provides an easygoing adventure for hikers and bikers alike. This trail is also a

popular cross-country skiing destination in the wintertime.

For some people a short 1.0 km walk out to the first bridge and back will be a great adventure; Walkers and bikers will get to see the great salt marsh, smell the coastal air and view some beautiful panoramas. Others that seek more of a challenge can make the round trip of 13 km or the one-way trip of 6.5 km. There are markers for every kilometre of this trail to help you keep track of how far you have traveled.

There are plans to stabilize the trail against further storm damage and the rising coastline, but in the meantime it is open for use at your own risk.

Shearwater Flyer – 8.0 km

This trail follows the route of the Musquodoboit Railway from Shearwater to Bissett Road, where it joins the Salt Marsh Trail. It is a 99 foot right-of-way with mostly private properties on either side. It crosses bridges that offer good fishing spots, and passes several bogs with unusual flora. Because it is on a provincially owned strip of land, ATVs are permitted with some restrictions.

Sport played a major part in life at Shearwater Air Base. Initially, the RCAF Station Dartmouth Flyers (renamed Shearwater Flyers in 1949 when it became a naval air station) competed in the Halifax City Canadian Football League. Subsequently, they played in the Nova Scotia Football League from 1951 and the Atlantic Football Conference in 1965. They won the national intermediate football championship in 1957. To this day Shearwater based teams proudly display the Flyers team name.

123 Species of Birds Have Been Identified on the Salt Marsh Trail

Listed below are 20 common species of birds that have been seen.

Great Blue Heron	Common Tern
Canada Goose	Belted Kingfisher
Mallard	Tree Swallow
American Black Duck	American Robin
Osprey	American Crow
Bald Eagle	Common Raven
Northern Harrier	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Willet	Song Sparrow
Great Black-backed Gull	White-throated Sparrow
Herring Gull	Blue Jay

Musquodoboit Railway History

The Blueberry Express

During the late 19th century, politicians and businessmen started thinking about a railway that would run from Dartmouth to Guysborough. Many false starts took place, primarily due to financing problems, before the actual construction began in 1912.

The first phase of the rail line covered the route between Dartmouth and Upper Musquodoboit; later the line continued to the village of Dean. Although construction of the line in Guysborough County was started, it never saw any trains travel on it; perhaps because there were conflicting ideas about which route the line should take.

In its heyday, the Musquodoboit Railway performed two main functions:

- **Freight** from the Eastern Shore consisted of beach gravel from Lawrencetown and Seaforth; forest products from Porter's Lake, Chezzetcook and Musquodoboit Harbour; and limestone from Upper Musquodoboit. Freight

to the Eastern Shore and Musquodoboit Valley consisted primarily of general merchandise for the rural communities. Prior to the Railway being built, coastal schooners provided most of the transportation of goods and services; however, when the railway opened all the schooners were put out of business. Freight service continued from 1916 until 1982 and during the busiest periods up to 14 trains made the return-trip to Dartmouth each day.

- **Passenger service** was originally very brisk, especially taking farmers to market and city workers home during the weekends. Prior to the passenger trains people had a choice of either walking to the city or going by oxen or horse team over rough, crooked roads. Passenger service ran from 1915 until 1960.

The railway service received its nickname, *Blueberry Express*, from the many baskets of blueberries carried to market for sale in Halifax and Dartmouth. Some say the name originated because the train made so many extended stops thus allowing passengers to get off the train and pick the plentiful blueberries.

Support your Community Park by joining or volunteering

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