

Walking Tour Journal

Camino Nova Scotia: *Slighe nan Gàidheal* The Gael's Trail



CALMCILLE
1500

Special Thanks

Thanks to the volunteers who ensure the maintenance of the Celtic Shores Coastal Trail and its Ceilidh segment, trail goers get to experience the local landscape, habitat, scenery and cultural heritages and identities this region of Cape Breton Island possesses.

Introduction

This travel guide/journal was created in partnership with the Atlantic School of Theology and is designed for walkers/pilgrims on the *Camino Nova Scotia: **Slighe nan Gàidheal** The Gaels' Trail*. The 92km journey through the scenic natural setting of this trail takes travelers through a region where Gaelic language, culture and history remain aspects of community life and identity.

The spiritual path of the Gaelic saint, **Calum Cille** St. Columba would have been along a rugged coastline very similar to parts of this trail.

Born 1500 years ago, in 2021 Gaelic communities in Nova Scotia, Scotland, Ireland, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man are celebrating the birth of this saint and important figure in early Gaelic society.

Born on December 7, 521 AD in **Gartan, Tír Chonaill**, Ireland, Calum Cille, meaning 'The Dove of the Church' was a central figure in the early medieval Gaelic societies of Ireland and Scotland. Establishing a monastic settlement on **I Chaluim Chille** [The Island of Iona, Scotland in 563 AD, **Calum Cille** is credited with spreading Christianity throughout what is now known as modern day Scotland. Though never travelling beyond Ireland and Scotland, Calum Cille's spiritual, folkloric, and cultural legacy and significance was brought to Nova Scotia by emigrant **Gàidheil** Gaels.

The local Gaelic language and cultural expression combined with the rich cultural diversity of this region of Nova Scotia are explored in this guide. The Spiritual Guide booklet that is provided as a companion to this booklet will provide walkers/pilgrims with more in-depth detail on the voluntary spiritual component of **An t-Slighe** The Trail.

GAELIC NOVA SCOTIA

Gaels are a settler people in Mi'kmaki, the ancestral lands of the Mi'kmaq First Nations.

Today, approximately one third of the population of Nova Scotia, a Canadian Province, that acknowledges the Peace and Friendship Treaties between British authorities and the Mi'kmaq First Nations, claims Scottish origins. The majority of those who make this claim are connected through Gaelic language and cultural heritage and identity to the early *Gàidheil* Gaels who settled in *Alba Nuadh* Nova Scotia.

As far back as the 9th century AD, Gaelic society had spread throughout most of what is now known as modern day Scotland. Since at least the 1100s, Gaels experienced legislative and military actions intended to oppress their language and ways. By the latter half of the 18th century Gaelic society was militarily defeated, broken up and further colonized. Voluntary emigration and forced evictions resulted in an estimated 250,000 Gaels leaving their ancestral lands and settling in the British colonies.

During this period, an estimated 50,000 Gaels emigrated to Nova Scotia. They brought with them their Gaelic language and its cultural arts and expression and a faith tradition based in Christian and pre-Christian spirituality.

Remarkably, Gaelic language and its cultural traditions and beliefs have persisted in Nova Scotia today. Walkers/ Pilgrims will experience this persistence by learning Gaelic language terms for place names, landscape and the natural environment, the choruses of Gaelic songs and local stories that relate Gaels' connection to their people, place and heritage.

Slighe Mhath Leat | Good Trail to you!

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Preparation for the Journey

Section One Theme:
Simplicity

Quote:

*O, siud an taobh a ghabhainn,
E, siud an taobh a ghabhainn,
'S gach aon taobh 'g am biodh an rathad,
Ghabhainn e gu h-eòlach*

Ó, that is the way that I would go,
É, that is the way that I would go,
Any way the road would lead,
I would take it with familiarity

*Attributed to Anna NicGilliosa | Anne Gillis,
Upper Canada (c. 1786)*

Map Footnotes

* also referred to in Gaelic as Inbhir Nis

** Malabo or Malabokek may also be the original Mi'kmaq place name, meaning Place Where Two Rivers Meet or Shining Waters

*** the French place name became rendered as Chestico and was thus the origin for the Gaelic place name

History of the Trail

Michael **Mór** MacDonald of South Uist, Scotland was a poet and a sea captain that visited the Cape Breton coast a few times but in 1775 the ice came in before his ship could leave so he spent the winter near the Grand Judique River. His Gaelic song about the event, "**O, Is Àlann an t-Àite**" | "*O, Fair is the Place*", is believed to be the first Scottish Gaelic song composed in North America. A few years later a few small settlements of Gaels began to grow where the trail is today.

The trail was originally a stagecoach line that later became a railroad built mainly for hauling coal. The train also carried passengers, mail, livestock and lumber traveling between Inverness to Port Hood. The Inverness and Richmond Railway started running trains in 1901. Buddy MacMaster from Judique was one of Cape Breton's most famous fiddle players. He worked as a Station Agent with Canadian National Railways (CNR) on the coal fired locomotives called the Judique Flyers. In time, Buddy would perform his Gaelic influenced, Cape Breton style fiddle music for audiences all over the world.

With the railway being taken over by Canadian National Railways in the 1930's and the construction of the Canso Causeway in 1955, some upgrades occurred to the rail line. However, by 1960 there were no passenger trains traveling and by the mid-1980s the line was no longer in use. In 2008 the trail became part of the Trans Canada Trail and volunteers from the local area continue to work to maintain it.

History of the Region

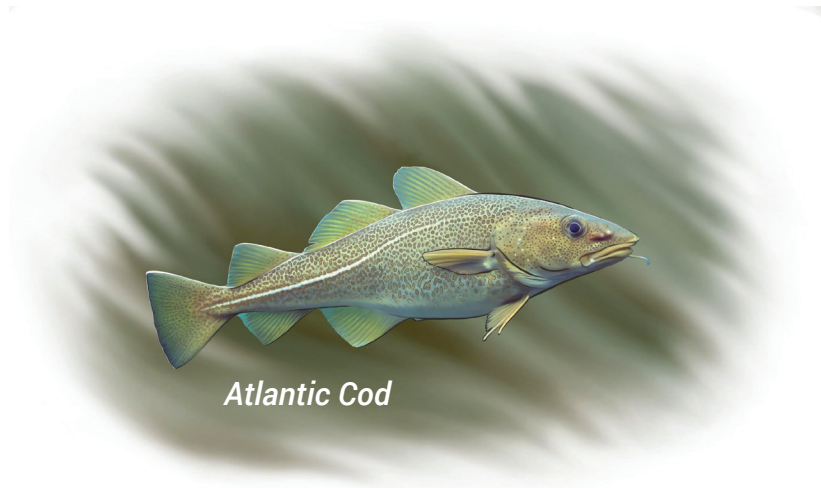
CULTURAL HISTORY

The coastline of this Trail was first inhabited by Nova Scotia's First Peoples, the Mi'kmaq whose linguistic and cultural legacy continue to inform the heritage of these shores. Because of its protected harbour and long sandbar beaches that created a natural stopping place for many early visitors, the Mi'kmaq place name **Kek-weom-kek** Sandbar very succinctly describes the area referred to in English as Port Hood. The Mi'kmaq place name **Mulapukuek**, *The Place Where Two Rivers Meet* conveys in topographical terms the area referred to in English as Mabou. And the island of Cape Breton is **Unama'ki** in Mi'kmaq meaning *Land of Fog*. On this their ancestral and unceded land, the Mi'kmaq lived here for thousands of years before settlers came, interacted and colonized, giving these places other names and impacting them via their own respective linguistic and cultural presence.



The Mi'kmaq call their territory **Mi'kma'ki** which includes all of modern-day Nova Scotia, PEI, eastern New Brunswick and the Gaspé Peninsula of Quebec.

Basque fishermen were probably the first European visitors, reaching the area as early as the 1500s. Their name for Cape Breton Island was 'baccalaos' from the Portuguese for 'codfish'. The cod fishery brought European fishermen here for the next three hundred years but there were no year-round settlements on Cape Breton Island until the 17th century.



Atlantic Cod

French settlers, first arriving in Mi'kmaki in 1604, referred to it as **Acadie**. After the Fortress of Louisbourg fell in 1758, Cape Breton Island became a colony of the British Empire. Acadian settlers and some Mi'kmaq were deported leaving behind a sparse population of Mi'kmaq and some Acadian and a few Irish settlers. Over the next hundred years Loyalists from New England, Gaels from Scotland, and more settlers from Ireland began to settle in districts along this trail. Despite experiencing **Le Grand Dérangement** the Great Upheaval or Great Expulsion of many of their people in 1755, above the trail in the village of Cheticamp, those Acadians who were able to remain, continued to fish. By the late 1800s coal mining in areas such as Port Hood, Mabou Coal Mines and Inverness and fishing along the coastline brought more settlers in to the area.

Settlers to these areas brought their languages and cultural arts and expression with them. Along this trail, you were as likely to hear Mi'kmaq, French or Gaelic spoken as English. Traditional Gaelic music and dance thrived in the area eventually producing several internationally known musicians and dancers. In Judique the Celtic Music Interpretive Centre continues to collect, preserve and promote the traditional Gaelic music of Cape Breton Island.

Along with their traditions and languages, these cultural heritages continue to persist along this coast of Cape Breton Island.

NATURAL HISTORY

As hikers travel along the trail they will see St. Georges Bay to their left along the Cape Breton coast. This is a habitat for whales, seals, salmon, herring, mackerel, cod, lobsters and other shellfish that have provided food and resources to fishers and marine birds for thousands of years. Much further up the coast just beyond the end of the trail is Sea Wolf Island, a National Wildlife Area. The island is also known in Gaelic as **Eilean Mhargaraidh** Margaree Island. Angus Y. MacLellan a Gaelic scholar and bard, born at Southwest Margaree in 1878 composed most of his poetry during the period he operated the Margaree Island (Sea Wolf Island) lighthouse from 1912-1946. MacLellan lived on the island for 50 years and had a large family. To supplement their income, the family raised many sheep. MacLellan retired as light keeper on 10 July 1946.

An Innis Àigh

Seinn an duan seo dhan Innis Àigh,

An innis uaine as gile tràigh.

Bidh sian air uairean a' bagairt cruaidh ris

Ach 's e mo luaidh-sa bhith ann a' tàmh.

The Happy Island

Sing this song to the Happy Island,
The green isle with the whitest beach.
Storms sometimes attack it severely,
But I love to live there.

*Composed by Angus Y. MacLellan (1878-1960), Margaree Island,
Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia*



Bald Eagle

The island remains a breeding habitat for seabirds, including Great Cormorant, the Great Blue Heron, the Black-backed Gull, the Herring Gull, and the Black Guillemot. Over 40 species of birds have been identified here. Bald Eagles sightings are also common in the adjacent area of Mabou Harbour.

Cape Breton is famous for its spectacular fall colours. The landscape around Judique is dominated by coniferous trees (spruce, fir and pine trees) with some maple and birch trees mixed in. Hardwood trees become more common as the trail gets closer to Mabou (maple, beech, and yellow birch). Living in these forests are a variety of wildlife including white-tailed deer, moose, snowshoe hare, and martens.

Near Mabou the land was not ideal for crop farming but Gaelic settlers found it favourable for sheep rearing. The hard-Precambrian rock in this part of Cape Breton is resistant to erosion and stands out from the surrounding

landscape. Clay soil and coal seams in that part of the province have influenced the economic choices people have made living here. Coal mines brought the railway and eventually those railway beds became part of the Trans Canada Trail.

PREPARATION

Careful planning for traveling the trail is very important. Some parts of the trail are remote and may not always have cell coverage. The longest section of the trail to be traveled in a single day is 26 km so be prepared. Hydration is important especially in the summer. Here is a list of things that will make your journey as comfortable and safe as possible.

- Backpack suitable for long hikes
- Minimum of two water bottles
- Snack food — for example: granola, protein bars, granola, and jerky
- Clothing (appropriate to the season) — extra socks, rain gear, and hiking boots
- Map/compass
- Cell phone/cell phone charger (cell coverage is not consistent)
- Emergency kit— first aid kit, multipurpose tool, knife, matches, paracord, and emergency blanket
- Sunscreen/bug spray
- Sleeping bag/sleeping mat
- Toiletries — toothbrush, soap, deodorant, and toilet paper
- Walking stick/poles (optional)

TRAIL ETIQUETTE

The Celtic Shores Coastal Trail is a shared use trail that is operational year-round. Please use the trail responsibly. Expect to see the following users on the trail: cyclists, hikers, walkers, equestrians and all-terrain vehicles.

Please respect other trail users, adjacent landowners and the environment by alert other trail users of your presence before passing and keeping litter off the trail.

The Celtic Shores Trail is managed by community volunteers. Visit trail website at celticshorestrail.ca

SAFETY INFO

In Case of an Emergency Call 911
Responding departments are based in Port Hawkesbury & Inverness.

For reporting fires, poaching and wildlife emergencies
Natural Resources Call 1-800-565-2224

Mobile phone coverage is accessible along most, but not all, sections of the trail.

Slighe Mhath Leat | Good Trail to you!



Port Hastings/Canso Canal to Creignish

Theme for Day One:
Hospitality

Quote:

*A' chiad sgial air fear an taighe,
's gach sgial gu lath' air an aoidh.*

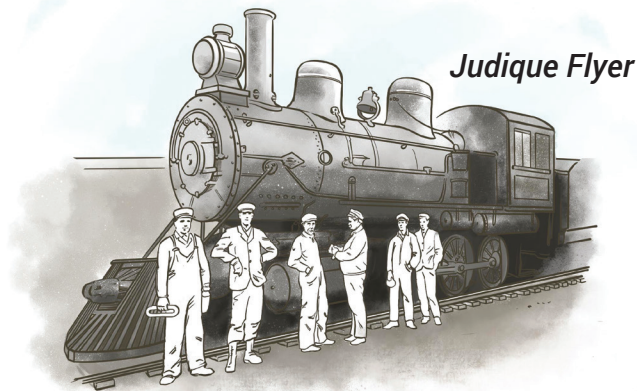
The first story from the host,
and tales till morning from the guest.

*"A Collection of Gaelic Proverbs and Familiar Phrases",
Edited By Alexander Nicolson*

SIGHTS ALONG THE TRAIL

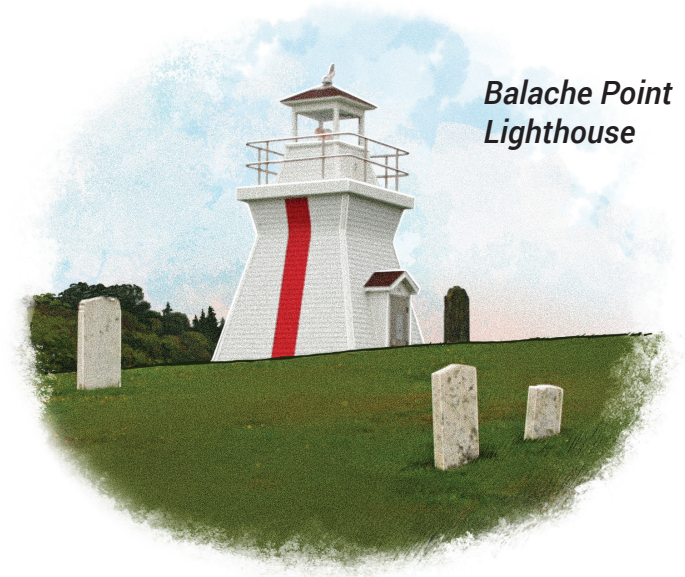
The Canso Canal is located in the Strait of Canso, on the eastern side of the Canso Causeway. The canal, constructed between 1953 and 1955, is 24 metres (78.7 ft) wide, 570 metres (1,870 ft) long and minimum depth of 9.8 metres (32.15 ft) with a single Seawaymax lock to account for tidal differences. Any vessel capable of transiting the St. Lawrence Seaway will fit through the Canso Canal. An average of 2,069 ships, with an average gross tonnage of 1.88 million tons pass through the Canso Canal each year.

Celtic Shores Coastal Trail has its origins in the railway line construction, commenced by I & R Railway Company in 1887. Running from Tupper Junction near Port Hawkesbury to Broad Cove near Inverness, the rail line fell out of use and was eventually abandoned. Over a twenty-year period, the rail line was developed into the Celtic Shores Coastal Trail, opening in 2008.



Balache Point Lighthouse and Cemetery are located on grounds adjacent to the Canso Canal. A lighthouse first built at Balache Point in 1905, was decommissioned in the 1950s. The current lighthouse built in 1963, guides vessels into the northern entrance of the Canso Canal.

A small cemetery of only six headstones is located by the lighthouse. The oldest headstone belongs to Douce Elizabeth Belhache, who died on July 23, 1795 at the age of six.



The Canso Causeway's construction replaced an earlier ferry service, the primary method of travel between Cape Breton and mainland Nova Scotia. As travel needs increased, via train, it was decided that a land causeway would be built. Construction officially started on October 9th, 1951 and the official opening was on August 15th, 1955. During its construction, acclaimed writer Linden MacIntyre cites in a fictional account that local Gaels referred to the causeway as ***Drochaid a' Bhòcain*** The Ghost Bridge as it seemed to emerge daily from the dense fog of the Mainland, inching ever closer to its Port Hasting's, Cape Breton Island destination.

As they previously migrated through the Strait of Canso, the causeway's construction has impacted the area's herring stocks. The causeway has also allowed non-native animal species to cross over to Cape Breton Island

such as bobcats and raccoons. Despite the causeway's presence, skunks, and porcupines both inhabitants of Nova Scotia's Mainland are species that are not found on Cape Breton Island.

Apatamkiaq the Mi'kmaq place name meaning *At the Place of the Turning Sand* was also named Port Hastings by early English-speaking settlers. Gaelic settlers referred to the area as **Cóbh a' Phleasdair** in Gaelic, meaning Plaster Cove due the amount of gypsum in the area and the subsequent mining that took place. In 1869, the name was changed to Port Hastings after Sir Hastings Doyle, a former Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia.

Port Hastings Historical Society Museum and Archives documents the construction of the Canso Causeway as well as local history and genealogy and includes a gift shop.

Long Pond is what is known as a 'parallel bar', a long, thin ribbon of sand, gravel, and rocks. This 'bar' was formed by the strong tidal currents moving back and forth through the Strait of Canso from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the Atlantic Ocean before the completion of the Canso Causeway in 1955. On older maps of the area, this long strip of land was referred to as Ghost Beach on account of its association with a local tale that a pirate treasure was buried there.

Troy is the hometown of international fiddling sensation, Natalie MacMaster. Troy may have received its name from the ancient city of Troy in Greece. It may also be an English rendering of the Gaelic word for beach **Tràigh**.

Paqasepekiaq the Mi'kmaq place name meaning, *Something Hangs Into the Water* was also called **Creiginnis** by Gaelic settlers in the area after Craignish in Argyll,

Scotland. In English it is rendered Creignish. The Gaelic place name comes from the combination of the Gaelic word, **creag**, meaning rock and/or rocky and the Norse word **nis** which means, headland. Creignish is the home community of internationally renowned fiddling prodigy, Ashley MacIsaac, Lisa MacIsaac, member of the Juno-nominated duo Madison Violet and Juno award winning fiddler, Wendy MacIsaac. It is also the setting for writer Linden MacIntyre's award-winning novel *The Bishop's Man*.

Stella Maris Catholic Parish Church and Cemetery



**Stella Maris
Catholic Parish Church**

Slighe Mhath Leat | Good Trail to you!



Creignish to Judique

Theme for Day Two:
Wonder and awe

Song:

O, gur toil leam, e gur toil leam
'S tràth a thig an samhradh cùirteil,
Chuir nam flùrs gu dlùth 'ad phàircean,
'S do choill' fo thrusgan rìomhach,
'S tric a bha mi fhìn fo sgàile.

O, I love it, O how I love it
 Early comes the kindly summer
 Filling up the fields with flowers,
 And your woods are clothed in beauty –
 Often, I've been shaded by them.

Composed by
Eàirdsidh Sheumais | Archibald MacKenzie (1861-1939)
of Christmas Island, Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia

SIGHTS ALONG THE TRAIL

Craigmore is named after Craigmore in Perthshire, Scotland and its name in Gaelic, **A' Chreag Mhór**, means "the great rock" in English.

Craigmore Enduro Park

Christie's Look-off is named after a local Gaelic woman, Christie "Cooper" MacEachern. Looking out over the panorama of St. George's Bay on a clear day, Cape George, Antigonish County can be seen. Prior to and following settler arrival, the Bay provided an abundance of food in the form of lobster, salmon, herring, mackerel, and cod. In the early settlement period (late 1700s into the early 1800s) when many Gaels had relations on both sides of the Strait of Canso, people would communicate on either side of the Bay by lighting bonfires on hilltops for communal happening such as festivals or deaths.



**Christie's
Look-off**

Long Point or **Ruadh Fada** in Gaelic received many Gaelic settlers, including a large contingent of **Siosalaich** Chisholms. A Mr. Colin D. Chisholm was a recipient of a bronze plaque by King George I, on which was engraved his son's name William Chisholm and bears the inscription. "He died for Freedom and Honour," accompanying it was a monogrammed letter as follows: "I join with my grateful people in sending this memorial of a brave life given for others in the Great War."

Walker Cove is **Cóbh 'ic an Fhùcadair** in Gaelic. **Fùcadair** is a Gaelic occupational term meaning, a fuller of cloth.

Baxter's Cove or **Cóbh a' Bhacastair** in Gaelic. **Bacastair** is an older Gaelic term for baker.



**Graham
River**

Graham River was described in the 19th century as having the most salmon per square meter of every river in all of Nova Scotia. Now, only a small salmon run exists on the river.

Rory Brook or **Allt Ruairidh** in Gaelic, named after a local Gaelic settler.

Sutik as it is referred to by the Mi'kmaq is most likely derived from the French word **Judique**. In Gaelic it is rendered **Siudaig**. During the early days of European settlement, the harbour in the area was often closed in by sand. Big northerly storms would close the channel and eventually break through. This caused French settlers to call the area jou-jou-dique or "playing channel". This was eventually shortened to become "Judique".

According to tradition, in 1775, **Micheal "Mór" Dòmhnallach** "Big" Michael MacDonald, a poet from the island of South Uist, Scotland explored a portion of the west coast of Cape Breton. During his exploration, he was in Judique

when the ice came, barring him from leaving. He spent his entire winter in Judique, encountering Mi'kmaq people during his stay. This was when he composed the song, "**O, Is Àlainn an t-Àite**" or "*O, Fair is the Place*", which is about this event and Cape Breton. It is believed to be the first Scottish Gaelic song composed in North America.

Two widely celebrated fiddlers who came from Judique are the late Dan R. MacDonald and Buddy MacMaster. Dan R. composed the fiddle tune, "**Na Brògan Dearga**" "*The Red Shoes*" from which the internationally recognized eatery, **A' Bhròg Dhearg** *The Red Shoe* in Mabou got its name. Buddy MacMaster's parents were both musical with his mother singing to him from birth in the Gaelic dialect of the area. He recorded several CDs, including "The Judique Flyer", named after the train, that once ran on the trail you are now traveling.

Celtic Music Interpretive Centre is a place that preserves and promotes the Gaelic music of Cape Breton Island. The Centre holds **céilidhean** ceilidhs year-round where you can listen to traditional Gaelic music live. It also has a gift shop with local CDs and locally made products and an interactive Exhibit Room where you can learn more about traditional Gaelic music.

St Andrew's Catholic Parish Church was established in 1818. In 1907, a mission was conducted at the Parish by the Rt. Rev. Archibald Campbell, Scotland. In his diary, Angus Innis MacDougall, a local resident wrote:

"Honour to Whome Honour is Due July 27th was a red-letter day in Judique. On that day the Rt. Rev. Archibald Campbell S.J. arrived at the Railway station in the oldest Gaelic Speaking parrish in Cape Breton and was received by the The Good People of the Parrish with a **Cead Mile Fáilte** *One Hundred Thousand Welcomes*."



**Celtic Music
Interpretive Centre**

Slighe Mhath Leat | Good Trail to you!

REFLECTIONS

Lined area for reflections on page 26.

Lined area for reflections on page 27.



Judique to Port Hood Station

Theme for Day Three:
Community and caring for others

Gaelic Proverb:

*Am fear a's fhaide 'chaidh o'n taigh,
's e 'n ceòl 'bu bhinne chual e riamh,
'tiugainn dhachaidh'.*

To him that went farthest away
the sweetest music he ever heard
was 'come home'.

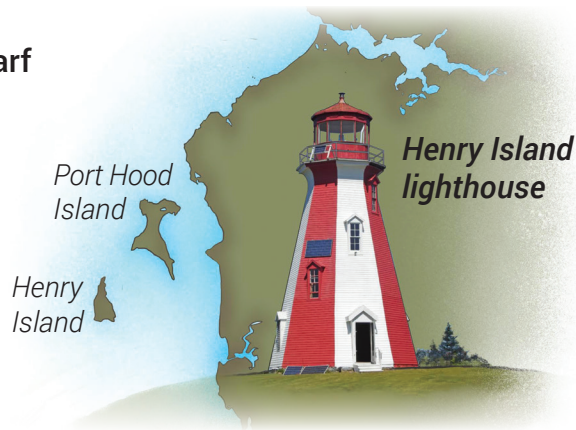
SIGHTS ALONG THE TRAIL

Shore Road runs parallel to the sea, cutting through the district of Judique and was an earlier road that linked Port Hood to Port Hastings. Walking on the Shore Road, you may see a stop sign located in the Shore Road lagoon. To engender a reaction from locals, it has been placed there over many years by local resident, Bill MacDonald. Above the Shore Road on the land side is the small hamlet of Hillsdale, the birthplace of Sister Margaret MacDonell, Gaelic scholar, enthusiast, and author of "The Emigrant Experience: Songs of Highland Emigrants in North America". Hillsdale was also the home of Hector Campbell whose remarkable Gaelic tales were recorded and transcribed by Sister Margaret and Dr. John Shaw in "*Luirgean Eachainn Nill*".

Little Judique or *Siudaig Bheag* in Gaelic.

Livingstones Pond

Shore Road Wharf



Henry Island was named as such for Henry Hood, the son of Admiral Samuel Hood.* In the 1700s, James Campbell was the first person to settle there. A lighthouse was built there in 1854 and fishermen would set up fishing camps there in 1866. The lighthouse was replaced by the current one in 1902.

Railway Road

Harbourview

Chestico Museum and Historical Society was established in 1978 to preserve the heritage and history of Port Hood. It is in the former *Sealladh a' Chala* Harbourview two-room schoolhouse. It holds many cultural and historical events that highlight the heritage and history of Port Hood throughout the year such as ceilidhs, historical slide presentations, and concerts. The Chestico Museum & Historical Society is also the organization that started Port Hood's annual summer festival, Chestico Days.

Kegwiamkeki the Mi'kmaq place name, meaning *Sandbar* or *Place Where the Sand Moves Slowly* was named Port Hood by English speaking settlers. This likely referred to the strip of sand that previously connected the village of Port Hood to Port Hood Island.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, many Europeans traveled to Port Hood to fish the local cod. This activity was seasonal, and for that reason, individuals did not stay in the area year-round. With districts in the area flipping back and forth as the British and French fought imperial wars to control this area, the French called Port Hood, *Juste aux Corps*. The British later named it Port Barrington. The French name was the one that stuck. "***Juste aux Corps***" means "*Up to the Waist*". This name comes from the fact that Port Hood did not have a wharf at the time, so individuals had to wade waist-deep in the water when coming ashore. Some also believe that there was a garment called a "***juste aux corps***" and the area of Port Hood had the appearance of one and thus it was named after the garment. It is unknown which of these theories is true. "***Juste aux Corps***" is where the Gaelic name for



Port Hood, **Seastago**, comes from, and from that came the word "Chestico". The first Loyalist settler in Port Hood was Captain David Smith and his wife Rebecca. The name of the village was changed to Port Hood to honour Admiral Samuel Hood, who was the Commander-in-chief of the British forces in 1767. Originally, Inverness County was named **Juste aux Corps** County.

Historically, Port Hood was known for its coal mines. They used to quarry and build ships here as well. During the period of French control and influence, freestone was mined here and shipped to the West Indies and to Louisbourg to assist with the construction of the Fortress there.

Port Hood Island



Port Hood Island was originally named Smiths Island after David Smith and his wife, Rebecca, who arrived in 1786 as the first Loyalist settler in Port Hood. They were on their way to Prince Edward Island when they stopped in Port Hood and decided to settle there. Their descendants live in this area to this day. It was renamed after the village of Port Hood some time later. It was originally connected to the mainland by a small strip of sand and was home to a lobster cannery. In the late 1800s the sandbar was hit by a storm and washed away. A road was constructed to the island in the late 1950's, but it too washed away. Possessing both a church and a school, there were families on the island until the 1980's. Alistair MacLeod,

the internationally acclaimed author taught school there. Mabou singer/songwriter, Jimmy Rankin's song *Lonely Island* was composed for the island. Bertie Smith and his wife were the last to live there year-round. Today, there are about 20 summer homes on the island.

Lawrence's Beach

Port Hood Station Provincial Park

The Boardwalk is where the Port Hood Mines were located when they were in use.

St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church and Cemetery

Slighe Mhath Leat | Good Trail to you!





Port Hood Station to Mabou Crossing

Theme for Day Four:
Perseverance

Quote:

*“Cha mheas iad gur e gòraiche
Bhith seinn nan òran bòidheach sin
A chual’ iad is a dh’fhoghlaim iad
Bho bheòil nan saoidh a dh’fhàg sinn”*

“They will not consider it foolishness,
to be singing those beautiful songs,
that they heard and that they learned,
from the mouths of the wise people who have left us”

*Cumaibh suas a’ Ghàidhlig | Keep Up the Gaelic Language,
by Alexander MacLean Sinclair (1840-1924), Seanchaidh na Coille |
Memory-Keeper of the Forest, Edited by Michael Newton*

SIGHTS ALONG THE TRAIL

Port Hood Beach

Murphy's Pond

Dunmore

Glencoe Station gets its place name from *Gleanna Comhainn* *Glencoe* in the Scottish Highlands

Southwest Mabou or *Mábu an Iar-Dheas* in Gaelic, is where the first known European settled in the Mabou area. His name was Captain Benjamin Worth and he was a British Loyalist who grew up in New Jersey. He came up to Cape Breton and settled along the Southwest Mabou River in 1786 or 1787. Years later in 1816, Worth gave his land along the Southwest River with some MacDonells in exchange for land on Mull River. For this reason, MacDonells can be found in the Southwest Mabou River area to this day. **Ailean A' Rids** (Allan "The Ridge", b. 1794, settled on Mabou Ridge in 1816. Allan belonged to a long line of poets and tradition bearers that stretched back to *Iain Dubh* Bohuntin (1513-1547) and the chiefs of the Keppoch MacDonalds. Allan was a well-known Gaelic poet whose work, as well as appearing in local newspapers and song collections, was published in A. MacLean Sinclair's *Glenbard Collection* and Keith N. MacDonald's *MacDonald Bards from Medieval Times*. The family was widely acknowledged for its talents in music, storytelling, family history and song composition.

Malcolm Brook

Delhanty Brook

Glengarry or *Gleanna Garradh* in Gaelic, is named for Glengarry, Scotland. Many of the people that settled here were MacDonells from that district of Scotland.

*West Mabou Beach
Provincial Park*



West Mabou or *Màbu an Iar* in Gaelic, is a community with very strong ties to the Gaelic culture. Square dances are held in the West Mabou Hall every Saturday, where people of all ages participate, and visitors are very welcome. The dances connect locals and visitors with one another through Gaelic music, danced and hospitality. West Mabou is also known for its beautiful beach and provincial park. Just off the trail is the site of the West Mabou Pioneer Cemetery. It was established in 1833 and there are approximately 144 graves there, many of which do not have names.

Nicholson's Island

Mulapukek from the Mi'kmaq meaning *At the Deep Bottom* or *Gouged Out* or **Malabo** or **Malabokek** meaning *Place Where Two Rivers Meet* or *Shining Waters* is the origins of the place name Mabou. **Màbu** is how Gaels rendered the Mi'kmaq name for the area. It is also known in Gaelic

as **An Drochaid The Bridge**, referring to the original metal trussell bridge built around 1870 to access the village. In the Gaelic worldview, bridges are considered supernatural because when on one, you are both on land and above water. In 1821, the first call for Christian ministry to Gaelic settlers in all of Cape Breton was made jointly by Gaels from Mabou and Port Hood to a Rev. William Miller from Ayrshire, Scotland. The people that made this call offered to pay Rev. Miller for his services to the two communities. Rev. Miller agreed to this. When he arrived in the area, neither community had a church. As a result, he performed services in settlers' homes. There were no roads at this time, so he was forced to travel by boat or on horseback. In 1824, Mabou's first Presbyterian church was built; the second to be built in Cape Breton. Rev. Miller preached in this church for forty years thereafter. Home to a unique fiddling style that is attributed to the Beaton and Rankin families amongst other, Mabou is viewed by many as a centre of Gaelic language and culture in Nova Scotia.

Mabou Marina

Mabou Harbour is an inlet off the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and it borders the communities of West Mabou and Mabou Harbour. It was previously named Hunting River.

Mabou River

Mother of Sorrows Pioneer Shrine is in a small pioneer church. It was moved to its current location in 1967 by the Brothers of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows. It was then restored and opened as a shrine in July 1968. It was dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows and the Mabou pioneers.

An Drochaid Museum is in the middle of the village of Mabou. It is named for one of the Gaelic names for Mabou, but also to represent the bridge between the past, present. It houses many interesting artifacts and records from the Mabou area. Many cultural events also take place in the building such as ceilidhs, Gaelic music lessons, and workshops to name a few. It is the home of the Mabou Gaelic and Historical Society, which is dedicated to cataloguing and promoting the Gaelic culture and local history. The building was built in 1875 and was originally used as a general store. This store was open until the 1970s and in the 1980s, the building was purchased to be used as a museum.



The Red Shoe Pub

The Red Shoe Pub is a very popular establishment in Mabou. When running during peak season, it offers live music, typically Gaelic fiddling with piano and guitar accompaniment. Often step dancers will take to the floor at one the popular Red Shoe sessions. Heather, Cookie, and the late Raylene Rankin, along with their sister Genevieve Fakoory, bought the Red Show Pub in 2004 and opened it in 2005. The pub's name is a tribute to Dan R. MacDonald, a Gaelic composer, who contributed greatly to the musical culture of the area. As mentioned previously, "*The Red Shoes*" is the name of the first tune he composed.

St Mary's Parish Catholic Church first opened on December 24th, 1897 with Midnight Mass.

St. Joseph's Convent was opened in 1887 when the priest of St Mary's Parish, Fr. Kenneth MacDonald, convinced the Congrégation de Notre-Dame to send sisters to teach there. The Convent served as a school with two classes for girls and one for boys. Having a total of twenty-nine students at this time, eight of which were boarders the new school quickly grew in popularity. By 1898, Protestant students were permitted to attend, and in 1928, the school had over four hundred and fifty students with eighteen sisters teaching. A new convent was built in 1950 that was big enough to hold community events. As many one-room schoolhouses in the areas surrounding Mabou were closing, it was decided that a new high school would be built in Mabou.

In 1964, St. Joseph's Convent was demolished. A new building on the future school's property to provide room and board to the students and the sisters teaching at the school. This building was named St. Joseph's Convent and the school was named Mabou Consolidated School. The Congrégation de Notre-Dame stopped providing education at the school in 1966, when the school director was replaced. They continued to provide room and board until September of 1979. Until 2018, the sisters still resided in this building, which could be used for community events. Now it is owned by St. Ann's Gaelic College but still provides a place for community events to take place.

Now owned by the Gaelic College, it was recently named, **Beinn Mhàbu** Mabou Hill and is the site where **Taigh Sgoile na Drochaide**, the first ever Gaelic medium school in North America is located.

St Mary's Parish Cemetery

Rankin's Brook

Mull River likely got its name from **An t-Eilean Muileach** *Isle of Mull*, in Scotland. Previously, many Wrights lived along Mull River. William Wright was born in Ireland and came to Port Hood with his wife, Jane Fraser, in 1811. He was the first Wright to come to Inverness County. In 1815, he petitioned for land along Mull River, which his brother, James, and his wife, Henrietta, started their farm on in 1819. James and Henrietta opened a store in their home.

Hillsboro is home to the Mabou-Port Hood Presbyterian Church, which was the first official Presbyterian church in Cape Breton. Captain Benjamin Worth was involved in the establishing of this church along with the first public school in the area. His grave can be found in the pioneer cemetery in Hillsboro, and it is the oldest surviving grave marker in this cemetery.

Slighe Mhath Leat | Good Trail to you!



Mabou Crossing to Inverness

Theme for Day Five:
Arrival and readiness for next journey

Gaelic Proverb:

Cha do dhùin dorus, nach do dh'fhosgail dorus.

No door has closed without another opening.

SIGHTS ALONG THE TRAIL

Glendyer gets its name from dyeing mill built here by a former Middle River, Pictou County resident Donald MacDonald in 1848. The place where he lived became known as “Dyer’s Glen”, which later came “Glendyer”. His sons continued his legacy and operated the famous Glendyer Woolen Mills for years.

Glendyer Brook

Black River

Lake Ainslie is the largest natural freshwater lake in Nova Scotia. From 1784 to 1820, Cape Breton was a British colony and separate from Nova Scotia. Its last governor, General George Robert Ainslie called the lake after himself. It was previously named “**Marguérite**” by the French. General Ainslie did not have a high opinion of the people of Cape Breton and went home to England in 1820 as soon as he was relieved of the governorship of Cape Breton. Some people that came and settled in Lake Ainslie from Scotland were McCormicks, MacDougalls, MacKinnons, MacDonalds, MacLellans, and Walkers. A locally famous fiddler by the name of Malcolm Gillis lived in Lake Ainslie. He was called the “Bard of Ainslie”. He played the bagpipes, accordion, organ, mandolin, piano, and fiddle. He loved playing the fiddle the most and won multiple awards for his fiddling from Cape Breton to Boston. He was also a teacher, but he was well known for his fiddling abilities.

There is also an obscure tale of a creature that lives in the lake known as **Bodach Mór Loch Ainslidh** *The Big Old Man of Lake Ainslie*.

Strathlorne was previously known as “Broad Cove Intervale” but was given this name in 1880 to honour John Douglas Sutherland Campbell, Marquess of Lorne and ninth Duke of Argyll. He served as the governor general from 1878 to 1883. The “Strath” part of the name comes from the Gaelic word **srath**, which means broad valley or vale. James D. Gillis, who was more commonly known as Jimmy **Dubh**, meaning Dark Jimmy in English, likely referring to the colour of his hair, was born in Lake Ainslie. He wrote books such as *The Cape Breton Giant*, *The Great Election*, and *A Sketch of My Life*. He also taught school and played both the bagpipes and the fiddle.

Kenloch

Deepdale

Broad Cove River is named for the community of Broad Cove, which is just past Inverness.

Inverness is referred to in Gaelic as **Inbhir Nis**, having as its origins the Gaelic name for Inverness in Scotland, or **An Sithean**, which means *The Fairy Mound* in English and is initial Gaelic name given to the town by Gaelic settlers because they believed the town was built on top of a fairy mound. This town shares its name with Inverness County, which stretches from the Canso Causeway in the south to Meat Cove in the north. The County was originally name **Juste aux Corps** County, but it was changed in 1837 to Inverness County. Father Alexander MacDonnell of Judique was the individual to suggest the name change. As he was originally from Inverness-shire in Scotland, he believed it would represent the fact that many of the people that lived in the area had come from that area in Scotland. The name change was formally proposed by William Young, who was the county’s first MLA in the House of Assembly. The town of Inverness was originally

named "Broad Cove", but it was changed in 1904 after the county it was in. Broad Cove is now a separate community near Inverness that holds a popular Scottish Gaelic concert every summer.

Inverness was a coal mining town originally. Coal was mined for years before it was officially discovered by John Beaton. After some time, a coal merchant named William Penn Hussey came to Inverness because he wanted to develop coal mining here. He found that the mining of the coal would not be difficult, but Inverness did not have the means to transport this coal. Hussey then built a railway and made a harbour in Inverness so that the coal could be transported. Hussey started a company called the Broad Cove Coal Company. Around the time the town's name changed to Inverness, the Broad Cove Coal Company gave way to the Inverness Railway and Coal Company. The railway from Mulgrave to Broad Cove was constructed, and about one hundred and sixty double houses known as the "red rows" were built to each house two miners and their families.

Inverness Visitor information Centre located at the southern entrance to Inverness Town has seasonal staff who can answer visitor related questions as well as offering brochures on local sites of interest and cultural activities.

The Inverness Miner's Museum is in the former Canadian National Railway Station and contains information on local history, the history of the local coal mines. The museum contains artifacts, drawings, photographs, and archives pertaining to Inverness.

Stella Maris Parish Cemetery

Inverness Beach and Boardwalk



***Inverness Beach
and Boardwalk***

Stella Maris Catholic Church

St John's Pastoral Charge

St Matthew's United Church

The Inverness County Centre for the Arts includes an art gallery, showcasing the work of both local and world-renowned artists and is a venue for cultural gatherings and presentations.

The Inverness Raceway was built in 1926 and continues to be used to this day, with as many as 35 races being held a year.

Cabot Links established in 2011, is a world-famous golf course which due to its international recognition, brings in a significant amount of tourism.

Slighe Mhath Leat | Good Trail to you!

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The Gaels and Their Place Names Map

<http://www.heathergabrielsmith.ca/GaelicPlaceNamesinNSMap/>

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