

To Reach the Park

The parks are located in Victoria County.



North River Provincial Park

Publications About Nova Scotia Hiking Opportunities

Hiking Trails of Nova Scotia.

Goose Lane Editions - July 2002.

Hiking Trails of Cape Breton Highlands National Park.

Goose Lane Editions - March 2002.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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 Department of Natural Resources
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 Colchester County,
 Nova Scotia, B0M 1C0
 (902) 662-3030
<http://parks.gov.ns.ca>

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Provincial Hiking Trails of Victoria County, Cape Breton Island

PROVINCIAL PARKS



Usige Bahn Falls



Provincial Hiking Trails of Victoria County, Cape Breton Island

For people who enjoy exploring on foot, Victoria County provides opportunities to access some of Nova Scotia's highest elevations, deepest canyons, dramatic look-offs and coastal scenery. A diversity of flora and fauna, and historic rural settlements also await. Visit North River and Cape Smokey Provincial Parks or Usige Bahn Falls for some of our most beautiful and exhilarating hiking adventures.

Natural History Victoria County is comprised of three distinct natural history regions.

The Plateau-Taiga region is an ancient and deeply eroded landscape that includes 1 billion-year-old rocks, some of the province's oldest. With an elevation of over 500 metres (1700 feet) this is the highest area of Nova Scotia. A combination of dwarf spruce, blanket bogs, and barrens dominate the region's vegetation.

Relict Arctic plants such as Alpine "Whortleberry" and several dwarf birch species grow here. Animal life includes relict Arctic insects and sparse bird and mammal populations. Moose and black bear also inhabit the area.

The Highlands feature an undulating landscape between 400 and 500 metres (1300 to 1600 feet) in elevation. Vegetation is dominated by an even-aged forest of balsam fir, with lesser amounts of white birch and white spruce. Barrens and bogs are common. Steep slopes are forested mainly with yellow birch, beech and sugar maple, with some eastern hemlock, white pine

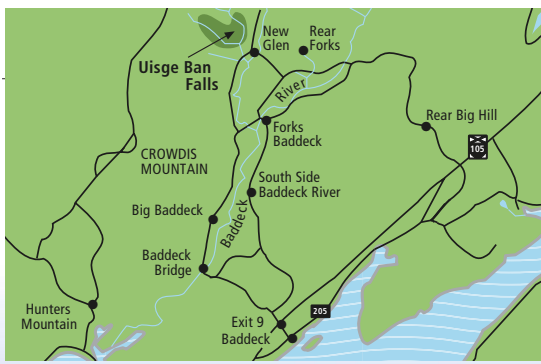
and balsam fir. Plants such as woodsia, common bladderfern, and willowherb, can be found on wet, north-facing canyon rock walls and in other shady, moist habitats. The area provides habitat for a remnant population of pine marten, lynx, and Gaspe shrew and rock vole, two relict species.

The Carboniferous Lowlands occur along the coastal margins of the Highlands, around Bras d'Or Lake and around the edges of the northern Cape Breton peninsula. They form a landscape of rolling plains, alternating ridges and valleys or a narrow strip of flat land at the foot of steep slopes.

The sea is rapidly eroding much of the lowlands back to the resistant sides of the plateau. At Cape Smokey, a mass of red granite rises precipitously 275 metres (900 feet) from the sea. In the river valleys and intervals, forests consist of willow, aspen, sugar maple and yellow birch, while the granite slopes support white spruce and some hardwoods. On the lowland fringe around the Bras d'Or Lake the vegetation is mainly coniferous, but some mixed woods and deciduous trees are found on better drained slopes. Double crested cormorants, great blue herons, bald eagles and waterfowl are common.



Breathtaking vistas from Cape Smokey.



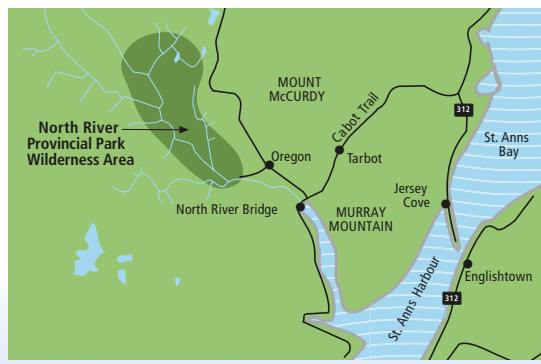
Uisage Bahn Falls

Uisage Bahn Falls, Gaelic for “white water”, is located 14.5 kilometres (9 miles) north of Baddeck. From Highway 105 take Exit 9. A 4 kilometre (2.4 mile) trail passes through a hardwood forest comprised largely of maple, birch, beech and leads to a 16 metre (50 foot) high waterfall.

The Falls Trail is approximately 3.0 kilometres (1.8 miles) in length and requires about one hour to complete. The trail passes through a field then follows Falls Brook upstream through a mixed forest and then a hardwood forest. The deep stream valley narrows dramatically in the vicinity of Uisage Bahn Falls. At the falls, the sheer walls of the gorge tower 150 metres (500 feet) on either side.

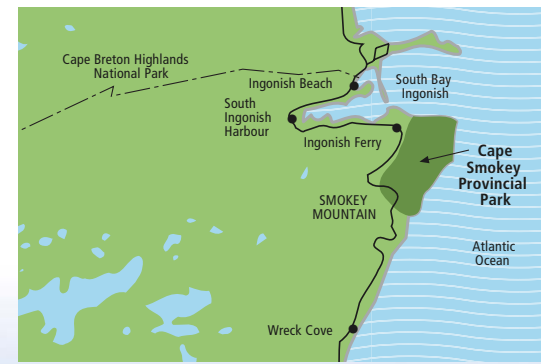
The River Trail proceeds north from Falls Brook. It is about 3.0 kilometres (1.8 miles) in length (return) and requires about one hour to travel. Following along the banks of the North Branch Baddeck River, the trail winds through a climax sugar maple, yellow birch, beech forest at the foot of the river valley’s steep slope.

The original trail was developed with assistance from the Nova Scotia Forest Technicians Association. Recent improvements were undertaken by Stora Enso and the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources.



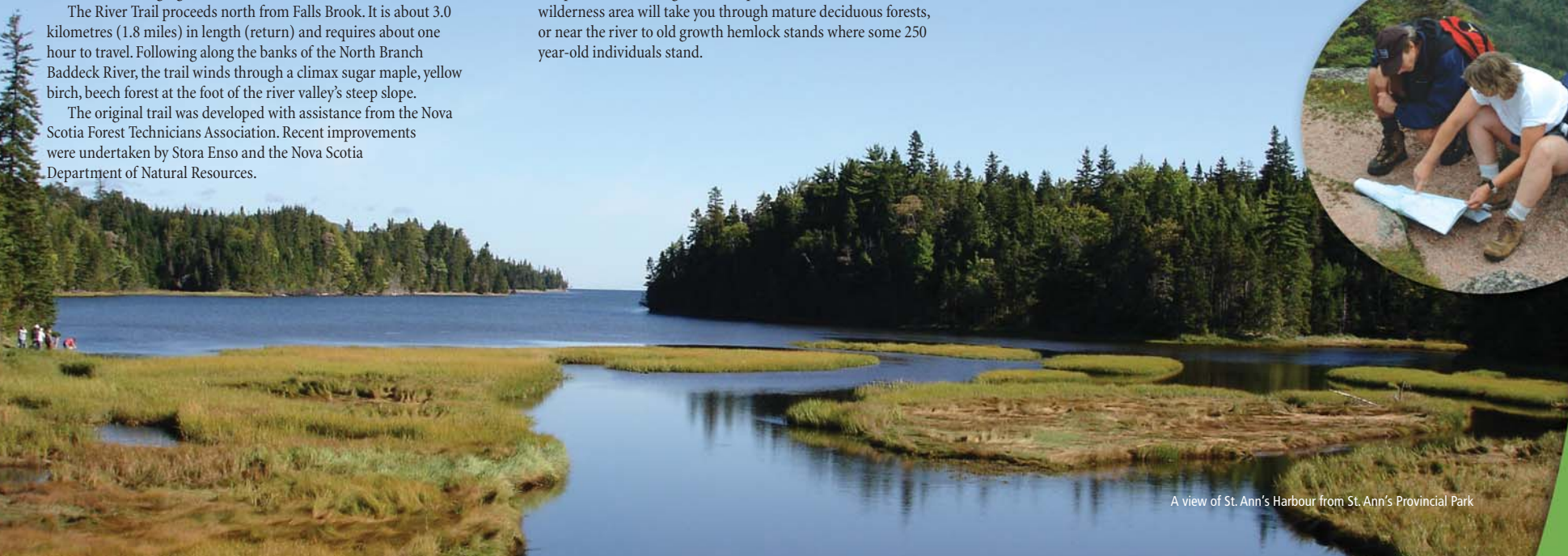
North River Provincial Park / Wilderness Area

This park can be accessed by leaving the Cabot Trail at North River Bridge and travelling approximately 4 kilometres (2.5 miles) north. The park provides access to the North River Wilderness Area which is well known to hikers and anglers alike. A small picnic area with basic amenities and parking can be found upon entering the park. Anglers have long used this spot to access the salmon-rich waters of the North River. Trails meander up and down the river passing through fascinating river-side habitats and forests. A well-established trail follows under the steep slopes of the river canyon to the base of North River Falls, which at over 32 metres (105 feet), is reputed to be the highest in the province. Other trails in the wilderness area will take you through mature deciduous forests, or near the river to old growth hemlock stands where some 250 year-old individuals stand.



Cape Smokey Provincial Park

Located on the Cabot Trail, 13 kilometres (8 miles) south of Ingonish Beach, Cape Smokey offers dramatic coastal views. A 10 kilometre (6 mile) trail offers numerous look-offs along 275 metre (900 foot) granite cliffs. Bald eagles and a variety of hawk species can often be viewed soaring on the updrafts along the cliff line. This moderate to difficult hike takes approximately four hours (return). Note: There are some steep, gravelly sections. While picnic facilities are provided at the start of the trail, there are no services along the way. Carrying drinking water is recommended.



A view of St. Ann's Harbour from St. Ann's Provincial Park



The solitude of the trail at North River.



A Special Message to Trail Users

PARK SAFETY

- Help preserve and protect these important natural areas for the enjoyment of future generations by ensuring that the trails remain unspoiled.
- Flowers, trees, shrubs and rocks are part of the natural beauty of these trails. Please do not damage or remove them.

PERSONAL SAFETY

- At look-offs, please remain behind the security fences at all times. The cliff lines are constantly eroding and may be unstable. Approach the cliffs only at designated viewing stations.
- Comfortable hiking boots or other sturdy footwear should be worn on the trails.
- Contact Department of Natural Resources staff for further information on the trails. They want to make your visit as enjoyable as possible.

