

**REGISTRATION
PURSUANT TO SECTION 6 OF
THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ACT**

NAME OF UNDERTAKING:

International Appalachian Trail Newfoundland & Labrador (IATNL)

PROPONENT:

International Appalachian Trail Newfoundland & Labrador Chapter Inc.

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THE UNDERTAKING:

(1) To add additional trail routes to the International Appalachian Trail Newfoundland & Labrador (IATNL), which is to extend from Port aux Basques in the south to Belle Isle in the north, and amend some previously approved (i.e., released from further environmental assessment) routes. See 2005 Registration #1194.

(2) The trail will be an extension of the International Appalachian Trail (IAT) which runs from Mount Katahdin, Maine through New Brunswick to the tip of the Gaspé Peninsula, Quebec. The IAT is itself an extension of the 70+ year-old US Appalachian Trail that runs from Springer Mountain, Georgia to Mount Katahdin. Both trails are highly regarded walking/hiking trails that promote a healthy active lifestyle, as well as the tourism and adventure tourism industries.

DESCRIPTION OF THE UNDERTAKING:

(1) Geographic Location

(a) The objective of the IATNL is to develop a walking/hiking trail along the 250 million year old Appalachian mountain range (Long Range Mountains) of western Newfoundland from Port aux Basques in southwestern Newfoundland to Belle Isle in the north. The proposed route will take the trail across some of Newfoundland's (and the Appalachian mountains') most scenic and geologically interesting terrain, from glacier carved fiords and pristine river valleys to coastal mountains with views of islands and icebergs. It will also traverse the highest point on the island of Newfoundland at Cabox, Lewis Hills.

(b) The proposed IATNL will total approximately 550 kilometers of new non-contiguous walking/hiking trail connected by existing trails and roads. The over 20 new sections of trail range in length from 1km to 90kms, much of it over barren terrain requiring only rock cairns to mark the route.

The proposed new trail routes and amended routes are as follows, with previously approved routes (2005) in square brackets:

- 1.) Little Codroy Pond: approx. 30kms. Located in the mountains east of Codroy Valley. This trail route is a new extension to the north end of the 2005 Starlight Trail. See Map 1-2008.

[Starlight Trail: 18kms. Located east of the TCH between Port aux Basques and Codroy Valley (See Map 1)]

- 2.) Lewis Hills: approx. 50kms. Located in the Lewis Hills between Bay St. George and the Bay of Islands. This trail route amends sections of the previously approved 2005 Lewis Hills Trail route. Both the southern and northern access routes onto the hills are amended to provide better overall access onto the Lewis Hills from the nearby logging roads. In addition, a second trail route is added to both the southern and northern access routes to enable a hiking loop for day hikers whereby they would not have to follow the same trail route both up and down the mountain. The route on top of the Lewis Hills has been amended slightly in order to improve views of the seacoast and valleys. See Map 5A-2008

[Lewis Hills - Blomidon Mountains: approx. 55kms. Located between Bay St. George and the Bay of Islands (See Map 5A)]

- 3.) Blomidon Mountains: approx. 40kms. Located in the Blomidon (or Blow Me Down) Mountains west of Corner Brook. This trail route amends the Blomidon Mountains portions of the approved 2005 Lewis Hills Blomidon Mountains trail route. The northeast access has been amended to provide access from the communities of Benoit's Cove and Frenchman's Cove, as well as from Blow Me Down Brook Trail. It also provides access to the scenic look-off area known as the Hummock, located between Benoit's Cove and Frenchman's Cove. The route on top of the Blomidon Mountains has been amended to provide a much-improved view of the Outer Bay of Islands, including York Harbour and Lark Harbour. A western access route has been added to connect these communities to the Trail.

An additional access route has also been added from the northeast to provide a scenic loop for hikers. This eliminates the need for hikers to hike the same route twice to return to the same point of origin (e.g. their parked vehicle).

See Map 5B-2008

[Lewis Hills - Blomidon Mountains Trail: 55kms. Located between Bay St. George and the Bay of Islands (See Map 5B)]

- 4.) Western Brook Gulch, Parsons Pond: approx. 18kms. Located at a.) Western Brook on the eastern end of Parsons Pond, and b.) on Parsons Pond Head south of the community of Parsons Pond. Trail route a.) is an addition to the approved 2005 Four Ponds to Flat Hills Traverse. The proposed route up through Western Brook Gulch will provide access to and from Parsons Pond, and is an important emergency exit off this remote section of the trail.

Trail route b.) is a proposed new trail section connecting to an approved community trail leading to Western Brook and Parsons Pond Inner Pond. The access and loop on Parsons Pond Head would provide a spectacular overview of the nearby Appalachian Mountains and International Appalachian Trail.

See Map 11A-2008

[Four Ponds - Flat Hills Traverse: 60kms. Located east of Parsons

Pond and between Four Ponds on the Main River and the Flat Hills (See Maps 11A)]

- 5.) Eastern Brook Gulch, Parsons Pond: 15kms. Located between Parsons Pond Inner Pond and Eastern Brook Gulch on the eastern end of Parsons Pond. This is a proposed new trail route providing additional (scenic) access onto the Flat Hills from the eastern end of Parsons Pond. This will increase the number of hiking options for trail users, while reducing the number of days required to hike into the Flat Hills. It will also add an additional emergency exit off the Hills.
See Map 11B-2008

[Four Ponds – Flat Hills Traverse: 60kms. Located east of Parsons Pond and between Four Ponds on the Main River and the Flat Hills (See Maps 11B)]

- 6.) Portland Creek Inner Pond: 8kms. Located in the Flat Hills east of Portland Creek. These additions to the Indian Lookout Trail are to a.) create a day hike loop in the west, b.) add an important access route to and from Portland Creek Inner Pond, and c.) create a mid-section loop of the trail to allow a shorter two day (as opposed to a more lengthy 3 day) hike of the trail. See Map 12-2008

[Indian Lookout Trail was originally approved by Crown Lands in February 2005 as a stand alone trail, prior to the 2005 Environmental Assessment.]

- 7.) Croque to Grandois: 27kms. Located on the eastern side of the Northern Peninsula, beginning just north of the community of Croque. This route is an extension of the approved coastal trail that begins in Conche and extends north to Croque. Extending the trail further north will essentially double hikers' opportunity to view this scenic coastline and its icebergs. See Map 16B-2008

[Englee – Croque Coastal Trail: 25kms. Located along the Atlantic coast between Englee and Croque on the eastern side of the Northern Peninsula (See Map 16B)]

(2) Physical Features

(a) The proposed IATNL will be approximately one meter wide with no bridges or board walks and developed in such a way as to reduce the possibility of ATV access. The only footprint created will be a narrow path over original natural ground.

(b) The proposed IATNL will traverse terra firma, avoiding bogs, marshes and wetlands. Much of the new trail will be through a mix of forested terrain, with the remainder over barrens and scrub, particularly at higher elevations.

(c) With few exceptions the proposed IATNL will be routed around municipal watersheds. At Portland Creek and Conche the IATNL has been granted permission to traverse a corner of the community watershed.

(3) Construction

(a) Development of the proposed IATNL will be phased in over six years. The first phase (Indian Lookout Trail) was developed in 2006, with 3 additional trails developed in 2007 (Indian Head, Humber Valley and Flat Hills Trails).

(b) As a result of the low impact, environmentally friendly nature of the proposed trail development, no resource conflicts are foreseen during or after trail development. On the contrary, the IATNL will promote sustainable and environmentally friendly tourism development across much of western Newfoundland.

(4) Operation

Once complete the proposed IATNL will be maintained as a low impact, environmentally friendly walking/hiking trail that promotes safe and reliable access to Newfoundland's great outdoors along its Appalachian mountain range. It is expected that the highest use of the trail will take place between the months of May and September of each year, with hikers being discouraged to enter remote back country areas near outfitters' hunting operations during the fall hunting season. As colder nights and shorter days are not conducive to back country hiking, it is expected that few hikers would be interested in such an adventure that time of the year.

(5) Work Crews

Sections of the proposed IATNL will be development and maintained by work crews of 3 to 5 individuals utilizing chainsaws and brush cutters. Safe operating procedures will be followed and no environmentally hazardous materials will be involved, with the exception of small amounts of gasoline and chain oil.

All fire safety regulations will be strictly adhered to and enforced.

(6) Project Related Documents

1. Municipal Recommendation Forms (required by Crown Lands) from communities along the proposed IATNL route where trail cutting is required.

APPROVAL OF THE UNDERTAKING

Required Approvals:

1. Approval from municipalities whose town limits the IATNL will enter.
2. Permit from Crown Lands Division of Provincial Department of Environment and Conservation to occupy Crown Lands on the IATNL route.

SCHEDULE

The next phase of trail development is scheduled to begin mid June 2008 and continue until late October 2008. Given the nature of walking/hiking trail development, weather conditions in Newfoundland leave only this short window of opportunity.

Later phases of development will extend from June to October, 2009-2011.

FUNDING

Applications have been submitted to Service Canada and the Provincial Department of Innovation Trade and Rural Development (INTRD) for funding to develop the Lewis Hills, Blomidon Mountains and Western Brook, Parsons Pond sections of trail, identified by maps 5A-2008, 5B-2008 and 11A-2008.

Previous projects funded by Service Canada include IATNL Marketing and Office Coordinator (2006), Indian Lookout Trail (2006), and Indian Head, Humber Valley and Flat Hills Trails (2007).

Previous projects funded by the Provincial Department of Innovation Trade and Rural Development (INTRD) include the Indian Head, Humber Valley and Flat Hills Trails (2007).

Projects funded by ACOA include the IATNL Mapping and Marketing Initiative (2007-2009).

Apart from paid trail cutters, volunteers account for a significant percentage of all IATNL operations, from executive committees to trail development.

List of IATNL Maps

2008 IATNL Overview: Port aux Basques to Belle Isle

Map 1 – 2008: Little Codroy Pond Trail

Map 1: Starlight Trail (2005)

Map 5A – 2008: Lewis Hills Trail

Map 5A: Lewis Hills - Blomidon Mountains Trail (2005)

Map 5B - 2008: Blomidon Mountains Trail

Map 5B: Lewis Hills – Blomidon Mountains Trail (2005)

Map 11A – 2008: Western Brook (Parsons Pond) Trail

Map 11A: Four Ponds – Flat Hills Traverse (2005)

Map 11B – 2008: Eastern Brook Trail

Map 11B: Four Ponds – Flat Hills Traverse (2005)

Map 12 – 2008: Indian Lookout Trail Additions

Map 16B – 2008: Croque to Grandois Trail

Map 16B: Conche to Croque Coastal Trail