

## MIDLAND SECTION

Map 31, 32

*The first 13.5 km part of the Midland section of the Ganaraska Hiking Trail is mostly off-road. Starting just north of Vasey Road, the southern half of the Midland section generally follows a fence line over private land. The northern half follows a snowmobile trail and the Tay Shore Trail, or its off-road twinning trail. The second part of the Midland section starts at the Wye River, adjacent to Sainte Marie Among the Hurons and the Martyrs' Shrine, on the outskirts of Midland, and follows the Wye River, the Midland waterfront with its gorgeous views of Georgian Bay. It continues through forests and ends at Overheadbridge Road in Tiny Township, which is the start of the Tiny section. Total distance of the Midland section is 28.2 km.*

*This section is on flat or undulating terrain. Some of the trail is a dirt path, some of the urban trails are paved. Enjoy!*

KM	DESCRIPTION
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0.0	44.677269, -79.741829
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The southern end of the Midland section starts at Vasey Road and Reeves Road in Tay Township. There is limited parking on the shoulder of Reeves Road. From Vasey Road, go north on Reeves Road for about 300 m.

Cross a small creek on the east side of the road onto a dyke. **Dogs are not allowed on this section** at the request of the landowner who owns sheep. Please respect the landowner's wishes. Follow the dyke until it drops down into a maple forest with a display of trilliums in the spring. Note that this area can be wet in the spring.

After a short distance, the trail comes out into a farmer's field. Follow the field between a ditch on the west side and the farmer's field on the east side. The trail turns east along an old rock fence line. Cross the rock fence line and proceed north along the edge of the maple forest. The trail continues to change from pasture to bush trails and the terrain is slightly undulating. You will have to skirt around a man-made pond on the east side. The trail returns into the bush and then opens up into cattle pasture. As you continue through an old apple orchard and approach Hogg Valley Road, there is lots of poison ivy, especially in the ditch as you approach the road.

4.1	44.7050012, -79.751999
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Hogg Valley Road has roadside parking. Please do not block the gate.

The trail continues beside the gate and turns east and then north on private trails. Look out for the blazes where the trail leaves the private trails. After passing an old rock fence, you will notice that the trail veers to the west. You will approach a wetland area, with an ephemeral pond, frequented by waterfowl. The trail continues over pasture and bushland with gently rolling slopes.

The trail stays on the west side of a private pond, where – if you are lucky - you may notice a couple of trumpeter swans.

Continue along a bush trail to open fields and follow the edge of the field. Just before the old CNR railway line you will encounter an active beaver pond, so this area may be flooded.

At the abandoned railway line, veer to the left 90 degrees (going west). This old railway line is now owned by the Georgian Bay Snowriders club. (If coming from the west, look for a stile to cross the fence on the south side of the trail, approx. 500 m before you get to Newton Road.)

8.4 44.7220689, -79.781342

Follow the old railway line to Reeves Road. There is limited parking here on the shoulder. Please do not block the entrances to the snowmobile trail.

The trail crosses Reeves Road, but if you go north on Reeves Road, this is a good location to consider some of the local history of the area. At the intersection of Reeves Road and Granny White Road is the Newtonville School, named after the Eastern Ontario community where the original settlers had previously lived. To the left, is another plaque commemorating the site of a former Anglican Church. There is also a small park located a short distance to the east on Granny White Sideroad, which is the site of the Saint Louis Mission National Historic Site (<https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/lhn-nhs/on/saintlouis>). The Huron village of Saint Louis was believed to have been located here. The village was burned in 1649, and Fathers Jean de Brébeuf and Gabriel Lalemant were captured while on a mission at the village. These Jesuit missionaries were then taken to St. Ignace (northwest of Waubaushene), where they were later martyred by enemy Iroquois. The gate to the park is frequently open during the summer months and a short path leads to a plaque commemorating the village and its history.

- 10.6 Just south of Hwy. 12, follow the trail on the east side of the old overpass down to Hwy. 12. On your left, you will see the old underpass through which the highway used to run.

- 10.6 **Take care crossing busy Hwy. 12.** On the north side of the highway, step across a row of limestone rocks and go left (west) on the paved Tay Shore Trail.

The Tay Shore Trail is considered the “Cadillac of Trails” in Simcoe County, and is especially enjoyed by cyclists, rollerbladers and walkers as it follows the gorgeous shoreline of Georgian Bay. The Tay Shore Trail extends for 16 km between Waubaushene (where it connects with the Uhthoff Trail to Coldwater and Orillia) and the Midland Rotary Waterfront Trail. Note: there is excellent parking at Trestle Park, just east of where the Ganaraska Hiking Trail crosses Hwy.12, with access to the Tay Shore Trail. The MTO also operates a washroom during the summer months.

- 10.7 Once on the Tay Shore Trail, notice remnants of old Hogg's Bay Trestle bridge, spanning the waters of Hogg Bay.

(<https://huroniamuseum.com/2008/02/09/hog-bay-trestle-bridge-1908-1978/>).

The wooden trestle bridge was built in 1908 to carry the Canadian Pacific Railway from grain elevators at Port McNicoll. 2141 feet long and 50 feet high, it was one of the longest wooden structures on the continent. The pine timbers were 8” by 16” and pilings of B.C. fir were 65 feet long. The builder was Mike McPeake of Port McNicoll. Patrolled by armed guards in both World Wars, this unique and handsome bridge was last used in 1971 and demolished in 1978. Also, enjoy a beautiful view of Georgian Bay. The village of Port McNicoll is to your northwest, and Victoria Harbour to the east.

- 11.0 At the junction with the Port McNicoll Spur of the Tay Shore Trail, you will see a parkette with a large trail map. Stay to the left (south side) of the parkette. The spur to the right goes to Port McNicoll, the home of the S.S. Keewatin, a 106-year-old Canadian Pacific Great Lakes steamship that was brought back from the USA in 2012. <https://sskeewatin.com>

### 11.5 Cross Tripple Bay Road.

At the junction with an old undeveloped CNR railway spur, you will see an antique piece of railway equipment and a beaver pond. The Ganaraska Hiking Trail leaves the paved Tay Shore Trail and follows the “twin” trail on the south side of the Tay Shore Trail to the tunnel under Hwy.12. This is a natural surface trail that is easier to hike on than the paved Tay Shore Trail. However, the weeds may be tall. This trail is used by snowmobiles in the winter.

Just west of the tunnel, the Ganaraska Hiking Trail comes off the paved trail again and follows the “twin” trail on the north side of the paved trail by going uphill and providing views over a tree plantation. This trail is also a natural surface trail which rejoins the paved trail as it descends again just before the Old Fort Road overpass.

The trail goes under Old Fort Road.

Cross the access road to the Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre and Ste. Marie Among the Hurons and continue to the Wye River. If, however, you were to turn left (south) on the access road, you can enjoy a visit to the Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre or visit Ste. Marie Among the Hurons.

The Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre ([www.wyemarsh.com](http://www.wyemarsh.com)) is located on 3,000 acres of wetlands, fen and forest. The Centre is open year-round and offers displays of birds of prey, amphibians, and reptiles as well as hiking, biking and skiing trails, canoeing and kayaking routes, an observation tower and boardwalks, and a gift shop. The Wye Marsh is also well known for the trumpeter swan reintroduction program that the wildlife centre has been operating since the 1980s. Currently, there are 55 to 60 adult trumpeter swans that nest within the marsh. The Centre is a non-profit organization whose mission is to spark a commitment to conserving wetlands, woodlands, and wildlife by creating exciting learning opportunities in a natural setting. There is an admission fee to use the Visitor Centre.

Sainte Marie Among the Hurons

(<http://www.saintemarieamongthehurons.on.ca/sm/en/Home/index.htm>) is open to the public between Victoria Day weekend and Thanksgiving. This site is a reconstruction of a Jesuit mission similar to how it would have appeared between 1639 and 1649 when French priests came to convert the native people to Christianity. Costumed interpreters will guide you through a 17th century journey. If you have a couple of leisurely hours, you may find this an interesting attraction.

- 13.6 Across Hwy. 12, you will also see the Martyrs' Shrine (<https://martyrs-shrine.com>) in commemoration of the missionaries who were martyred in the 1600's. It's also well worth a visit, as are the grounds around the Shrine.

### 13.6 44.73561, -79.84564

Cross the Wye River via the foot bridge and follow the path under Hwy. 12 to the Sainte Marie Park parking lot (not to be confused with Sainte Marie Among the Hurons parking lot, which is on the SE side of the Wye River & Hwy .12). The Sainte Marie parking lot is on the NW corner of Hwy. 12 and the Wye River and can be accessed off Wye Valley Road. Free parking of approximately. 20 cars. There is also a launch for kayaks and canoes.

Continue through the green gate into Sainte Marie Park, which is operated by Huronia Historical Sites (on behalf of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sports). The gravel trail winds through the park and reaches a small roundabout with parking for a few cars.

44.74088, -79.84904

Cross the roundabout diagonally and enter a narrow trail along the Wye River on the lands of Georgian Bay Islands National Park's office. There is a gorgeous photo opportunity of the Wye River looking to Georgian Bay just before the dirt path turns west. The trail goes down a small ravine with a pedestrian bridge with bollards and continues near the river to the paved Midland Rotary Waterfront Trail.

44.74515, -79.85391

Continue north on the paved multi-use Midland Rotary Waterfront Trail and enjoy the views of Georgian Bay. You will come to a small gazebo (at Yonge Street) with benches: a great shaded spot for a rest or picnic.

17.1 44.75696, -79.87122

Small parking lot for approximately 8 cars on the west side of Aberdeen Blvd., but only park on the south side of the office buildings.

Continue on the concrete path and along the water treatment plant to Midland Bay Landing, at the corner of William Street and Bayshore Blvd. While the trail continues over the grass, there is a short boardwalk, benches, and a port-a-potty at the water's edge. Free parking for 20-30 cars.

44.75869, -79.87812

Midland Bay Landing. Cross the grass to a concrete bench and continue along a dirt path, at the bottom of the hillside.

44.75239, -79.88872

Downtown Midland and Harbour. Municipal parking lot, currently free, but this may change. Washrooms at the Harbour Master building during the summer months (Victoria Day to Thanksgiving). Restaurants, groceries, coffee shops, etc.

Cross at the King Street traffic lights and follow the asphalted trail along the boat slips and past the swan statue, designed and fabricated by Ganaraska member Ron Hunt in honour of the trumpeter swan re-introduction project at the Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre (on hwy 12). Large cruise ships visit Midland in the summer and fall. The elevators of the ADM plant process grains, brought in by large freighters. The mural on the wall of the elevator is the largest outdoor historic mural in North America, it measures 80 feet high by 250 feet wide. It depicts a Jesuit Priest and a Huron Native gazing from a hilltop over the Wye Valley and into the nearby village of Saint-Marie, as it would have appeared in 1640.

Enter the asphalted multi-use trail on the south side of the flour mill and continue westward and then north to Pete Pettersen Park. You will pass several old piers, which used to be used as winter births for lake freighters.

20.3 44.75582, -79.89707

Large parking lot at Pete Pettersen Park with its beach, boat launch, playground, baseball field, and views of Georgian Bay, as well as Bayport Marina and the Midland Sailing Club. Lots of free parking, closest to the baseball field. Do not park in the boat trailer parking lot (in front of the apartment building) as you may get ticketed. Washroom is open Victoria Day to Thanksgiving.

Continue on the paved trail until you pass a wetland on your west side. Turn left (west) between the wetland and the creek in front of the apartment building. Cross Harbourview Road and walk on the west side of Harbourview until you reach the Mid Pen Link trail.

44.75914, -79.90344

Entrance to the paved Mid Pen Link Trail which links Midland to Penetanguishene, through the Sunnyside valley and forest. The trail ascends very steeply to Murray Road. Continue for about 1 km up and down along Murray Road.

44.76373, -79.92881

Thompson Road East/West intersection with County Road 93. Cross at the lights and follow Thompson Road West into the Thompson tract of Simcoe County Forest, Follow the blazed trail through the Thompson Forest and a tree plantation on an old dump from a silica plant, used for glass making. You may still find some whitish silica rocks. At the western end of the plantation, cross the unopened Wilson Road, and then veer to the NW. The trail then continues through a red pine forest which was logged in 2023. At the end turn left (west) along a double track to Overhead Bridge Road.

Km 44.74867, -79.96043

28.2 Overhead Bridge Road. Parking across the road on the shoulder of Kingfisher Road. (Note the current parking lot will be closed in the summer of 2024 and a new parking lot with better sight lines will be opened just to the south on Overhead Bridge Road).

This is the junction of the Midland section of the Ganaraska Hiking Trail and the Tiny section.