



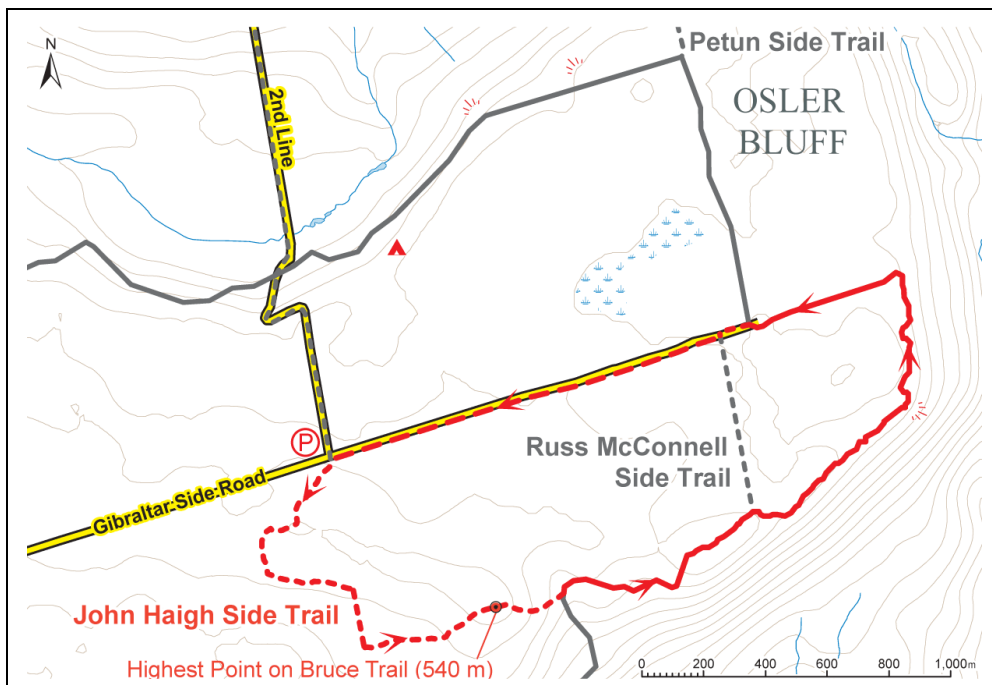
Close to nature.
Close to home.

THE BRUCE TRAIL
CONSERVANCY

As High As You Can Go - The North Rim of the Pretty River Valley

Hike Length: 4.8 km

Section: Blue Mountains Bruce Trail Club



How to get there and Where to Park: The hamlet of Gibraltar is located on the 4th Line of Grey County, one concession south of Grey Road 19 (southwest of Collingwood). From the intersection, drive east on the Gibraltar Side Road to the 2nd Line. Park at the corner (6th Sideroad).

Description of hike: Immediately to your right (west) as you start south on the 2nd Line Road Allowance, the John Haigh Side Trail takes you into a mature woods. It then arcs back to the road allowance for a very short distance before turning sharply left (east). Follow the blue blazes to the Highest Point on the Bruce Trail, at 540 m above sea level. The elevation is the result of the Algonquin Arch, a southwest-tending Precambrian rise which forms the topographic spine of southwestern Ontario. Rock layers are thinner over the Arch because it was periodically exposed above sea level 450 to 415 million years ago when the sediments were being deposited in the fluctuating shallow marine environment. Today it results in both poor farming conditions and good ski hills.

Continue on the Trail to the east, and soon it joins the white blazes of the main Trail, continuing along the top of the valley. Along this 2 km stretch you will see some of Ontario's most impressive geological features. As the glaciers retreated, continuous freeze-thaw conditions prevailed, creating excessive quantities of groundwater. Where the hard caprock and the soft underlying shale came in contact, huge blocks, under the pull of gravity, detached themselves and slid down the slippery shale surface. The result was deep, wide crevices. These crevice caves can be tens of metres wide and up to 20 metres deep, and they are renowned for their unusual microclimate and flora. Individual blocks may boast surface dimensions of 20 to 20 metres in length, and they may be pitched forward or tilted backwards to create impressive crevices.

Continue following the white blazes to the Gibraltar Sideroad; from here you simply walk west along this little-used road to your car.