

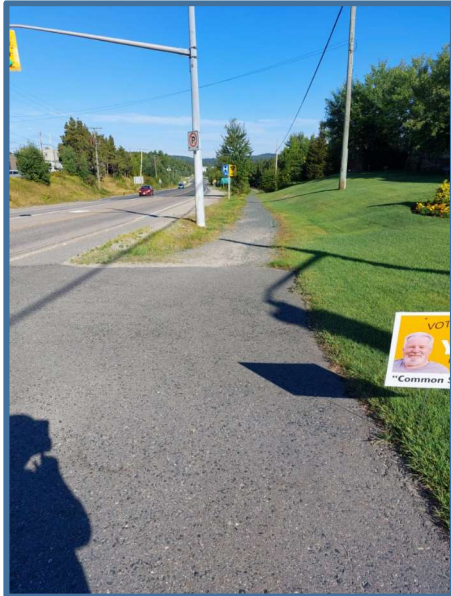
And-Do Number 1: The Horne Lake Trail Photo Inventory

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Context

On Thursday, August 18, 2022, I walked from the Hampton Inn to the ATV trail sign on 108, following the Horne Lake trail maintained by the City of Elliot Lake Works Department. I took photographs at intervals to provide a visual aid for discussions about developing and installing public art along the trail. The Advisory Committee is working on a five-year plan to install public art in outdoor public spaces around the city.

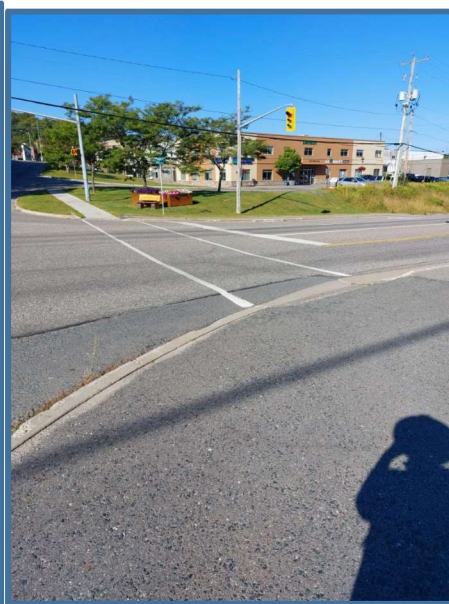
Start



I took three photos of the approach to the hotel. Note that I did **NOT** realize that the photo to the left was the start of the trail. After I took the approach photos I continued walking toward the ELRL office on the roadway that separates that office from the hotel. I was looking for a trail-head sign. I walked as far as the end of the ELRL staff parking lot, which overlooked what I decided must be the trail for which I was searching. I back tracked, then crossed the lawn that you can see, where I found the cinder path.

Observation: Standardized signs are needed.

Suggestion: They are designed by an artist in conjunction with the Works Department to support the Woodlands Theme.



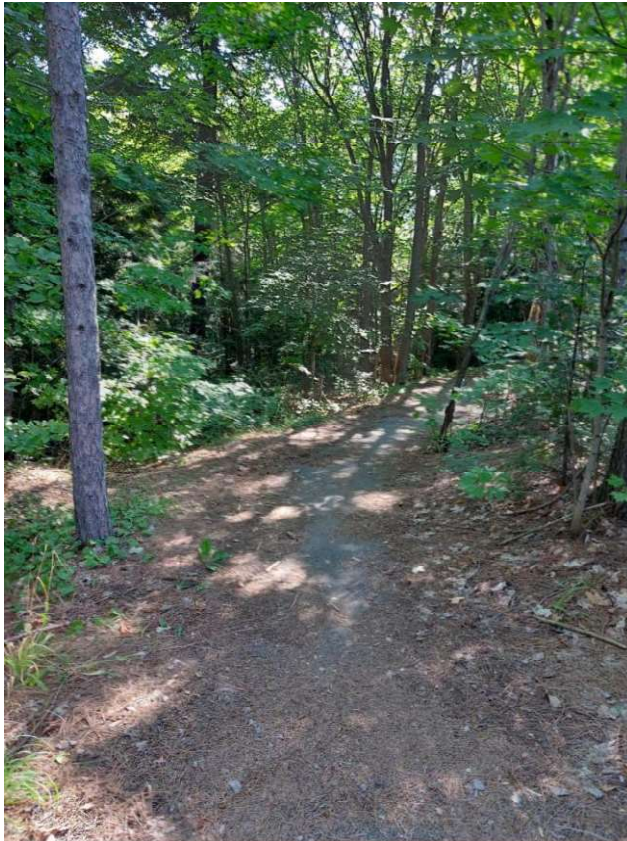


Approaching a trail intersection.

No signs to indicate to the walker what to expect.



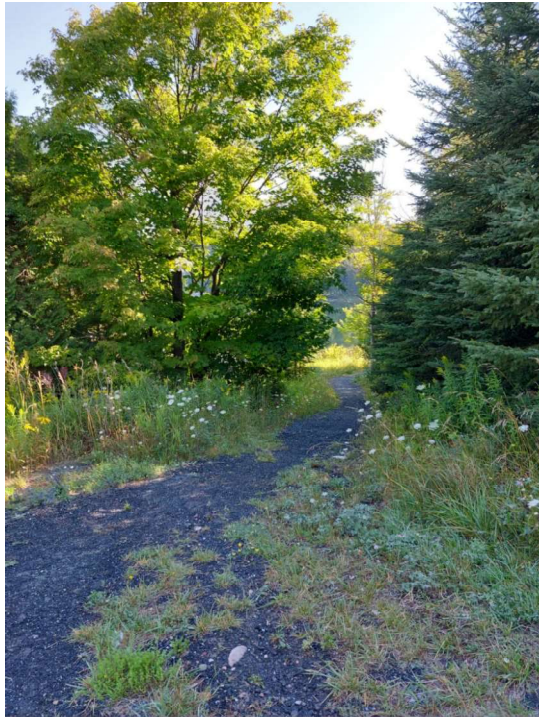
None of the signs visible provide walkers with any useful information to guide them in their choice of direction. I hoped that by choosing the direct route through the barrier on the other side of the intersection I was correct. Note that there is a barrier to the right that is prohibiting the choice of turning right and following the path back. No confidence is instilled in the first time walker.



I encountered this offshoot as I walked the path. It is the sort of place we could insert art to surprise the walker. Note that there are no signs to tell a walker where this off shoot goes.



At this point in the trail a bench appears on which to rest and enjoy the views. There is sufficient space near the bench for art.



This branch leads down to the lake. Perhaps it does not need an explanation. However, no sign to name the lake or add any geological or biological context has been visible at any point along the path so far.



Another bench. The rise behind the bench would limit the size and type of art possible.

Note: I did not take into account difficulty of terrain, proximity to the highway, and other conditions that might preclude art to protect the safety of walkers. My experience has instilled in me a belief that if you build it, some tourist will take the path less travelled, and, most likely, to cause injury.



The third bench. I observed that some of the benches, due to over growth, have limited views of the lake (as in none during August when the growth is thickest).

Perhaps the benches have been spaced based on known distances for the comfort of walkers. If so the benches with the most limited views should be the ones that are enhanced by art first.





A bench, an intersection and no signage to assist a walker.





What is it? How do you reach it?

No signage.



Space for art.

Another bench.



Again no sign to explain the intersection.

I do not suggest art here, because this is one of the sacred spaces along the route.



Signs to explain the significance of the fountain are present. This is an example of the standard that we should encourage along the full length of the path.

That said, the signs do not need to be as solemn as these for obvious reasons.



This T intersection leading to the Miner's park should have some indication of directions and anticipation of options ahead.

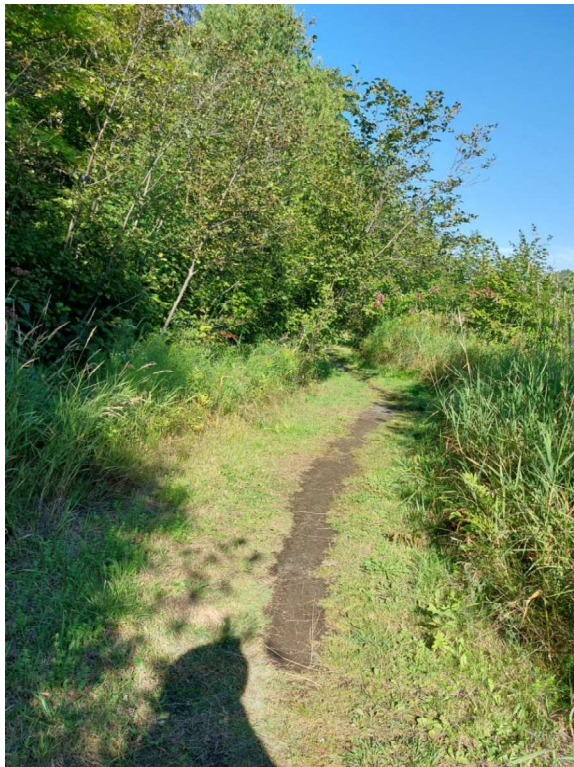
I knew it was the miner's park ahead, but someone new to the city would not.



It never occurred to me that there was a choice: to walk up hill and into the miner's park to pick up the trail on the other side; or to follow the lakeside path around and below the park. I thought the trail was option two and followed it. My discovery that there was a choice, was made on my return back along the trail.

Signage needed.

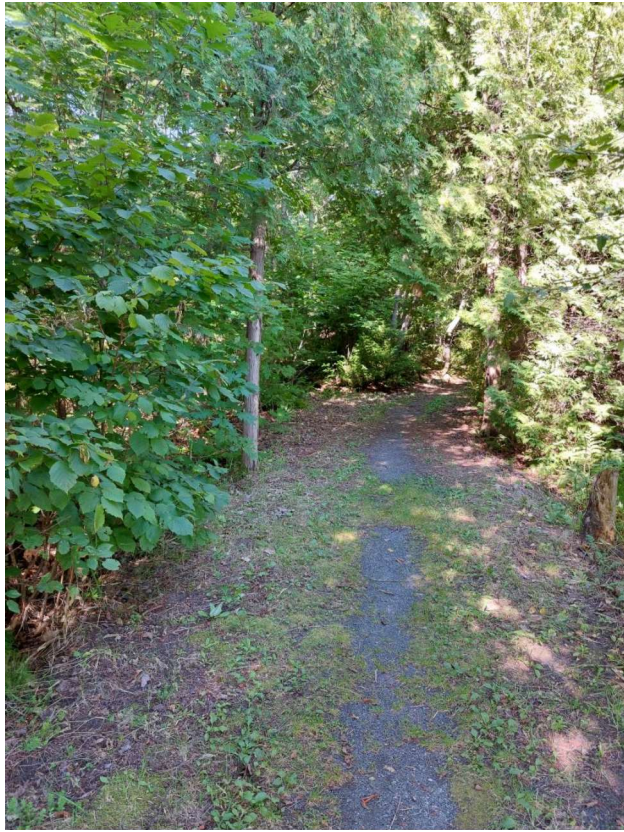




One reason we are considering this trail as our first project is that it is paved and flat, or so I was lead to believe.

This is a photo of the lower trail, which is not appropriate for folk in walkers or who have mobility issues. A sign back at the intersection would inform walkers of the options and their challengers so they could make an informed decision and not end up like me on a rough trail.

BTW: My comments are NOT complaints, but are observations based on decades of creating tourism experiences for a wide range of people with various interests, skills and abilities.





Now I am back on the main trail that parallels 108.

Around this bench there is plenty of space for an art installation.



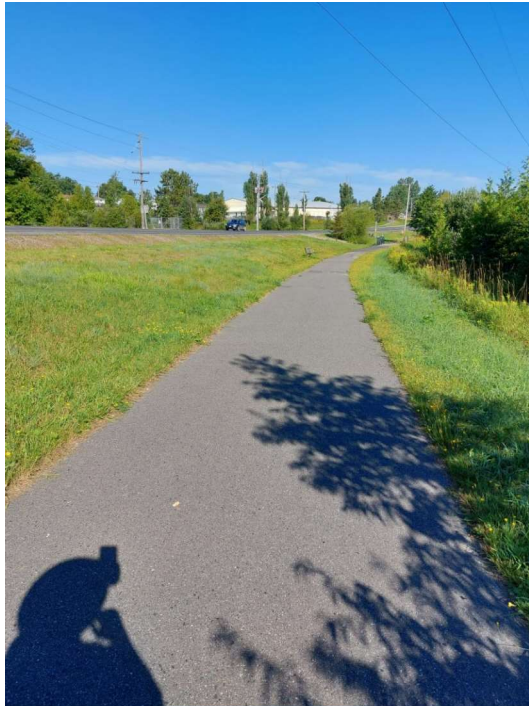


No signs, although an observant walker would note that there is a path of the lake and bench visible.

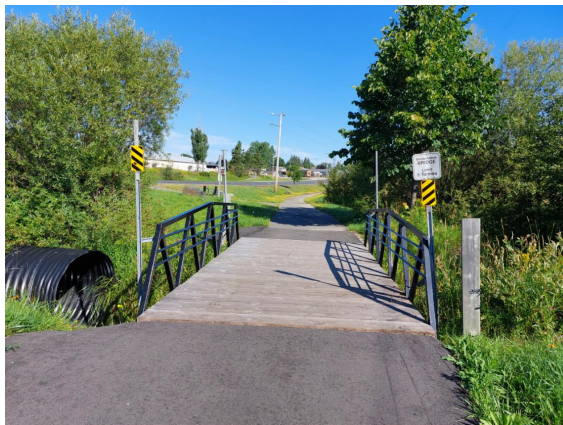
However, wrangling kids and/or dogs, this little lookout is easily missed.

It is well worth the detour!





Lots of space for an interactive art project...however the proximity to the highway is problematic if you are wrangling grandchildren. Safety should be an element of the design process.



An access point without signs that are useful to a stranger trying to decide in which direction to walk.



No lights, crosswalk or any other assist for pedestrians crossing the highway. Nor is there signage to explain why they might want to cross the highway to join the trail on the other side.

I opted for safety and did not cross the highway, but continued along the lake path.



Gravenhurst uses culverts as teaching moments. Providing signs that explain the marsh, the wildlife and the efforts that town is making to bring marsh life back to their waterfront. We probably don't need to to explain the latter, but an explanation about marsh flora and fauna would be interesting.

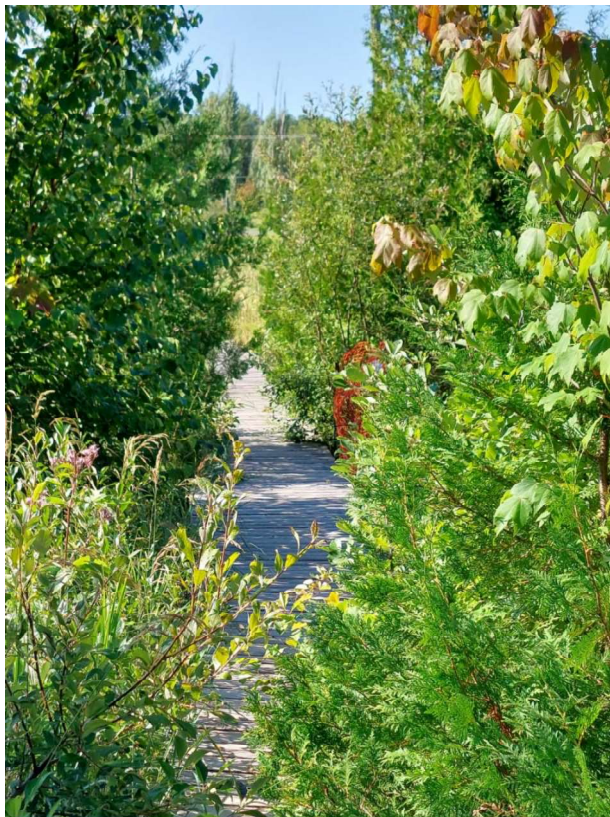


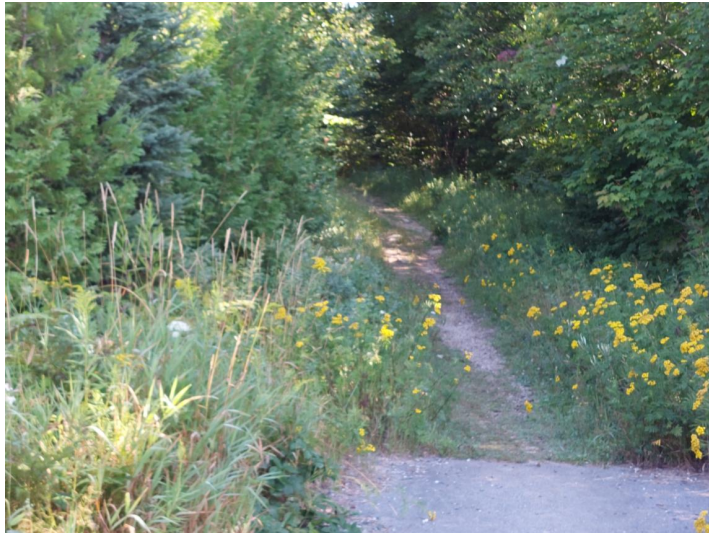


The boardwalk was a surprise, as I love boardwalks through marsh land. I was disappointed, yet puzzled by the sign that said no walking, as the boardwalk itself was “open”. The sign did not cross the boardwalk making it clear that was what was meant.

My inner child decided to explore, just like any tourist.

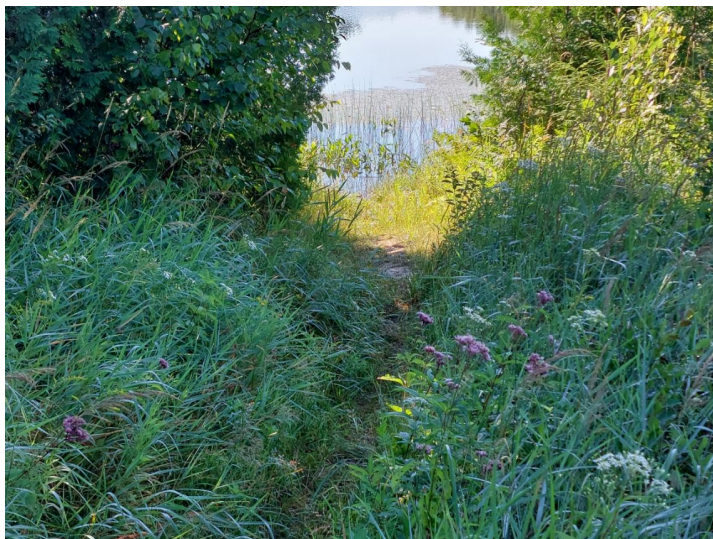
I restrained myself when I realized that the boardwalk had not been maintained, as it was overgrown.





So I turned and followed the path to the end of the pavement.

Should I go on? Was I supposed to go on? Yep, absent signage.



I noticed a small path branching off toward the water. I didn't follow it, but I wished there was a sign to tell me what I might be missing.

Why didn't I follow it? I am not steady on my feet, and I don't swim. Caution kept me on the solid path. Not all tourists would do so.

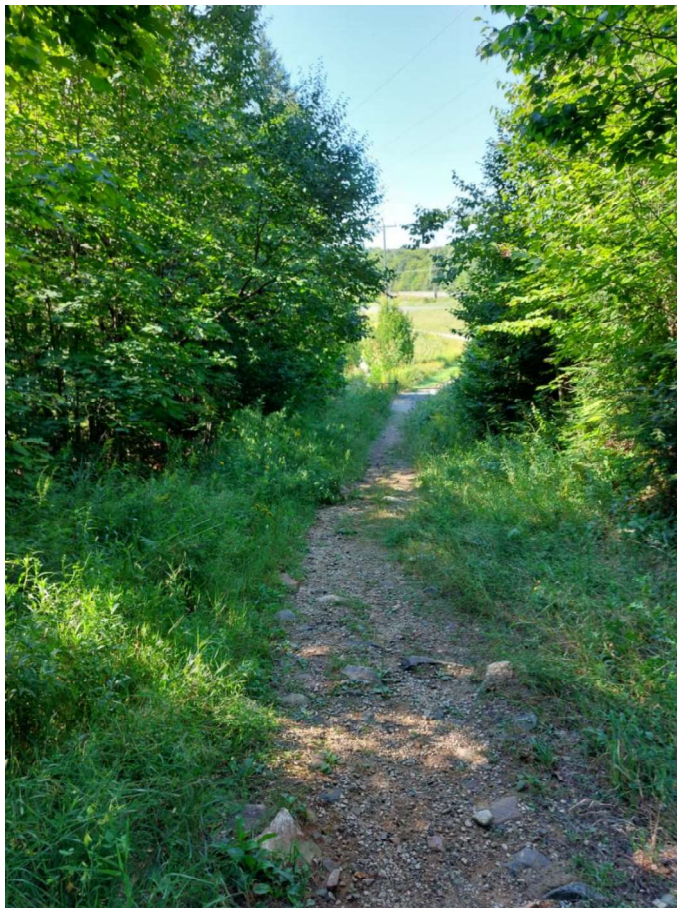


Oh dear, indecision again. No signs, but clearly something was delineated.

But I was left space to pace through, so pass I did.



I turned around and took a photo of what was behind, as if I approached from the opposite direction. A tempting, easy path was visible, and so was the boardwalk, although I couldn't tell it was closed.

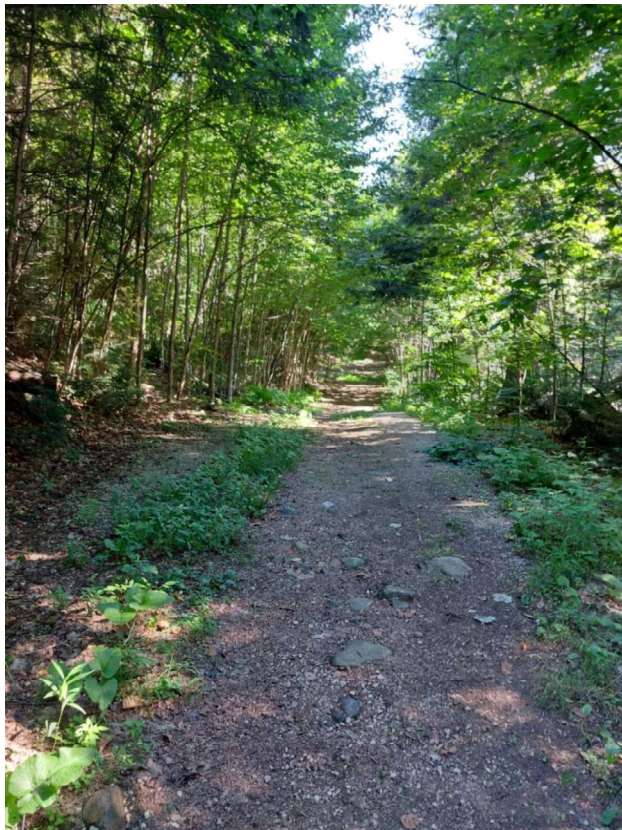


There was an opportunity to leave the path and return the way I came.

I kept going.



It occurred to me that I might have stumbled on a snowmobile trail, not intended for hiking. However, there was nothing to confirm or deny that idea.



There were varying degrees of hardship. This section was relatively simple to travel.



Eventually the trail led to the highway.



For the first time I found a sign that was useful to a hiker. I had been traversing an ATV trail. The sign said it was designated. At the highway entrance perhaps, but once on the trail there was nothing to indicate it was an ATV trail.



Looking back down the trail from the highway.



I began the return walk to the trail-head following the shoulder of the highway.



Until I reached this higher ground I hadn't realized that the boardwalk was extensive.



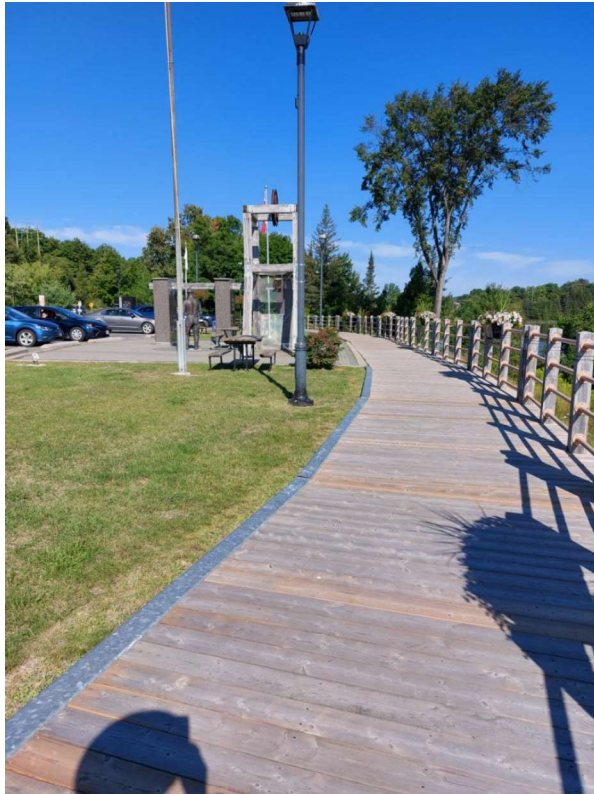
I found this light incline and left the highway to follow the trail.



This was the moment I discovered that the trail actually crossed the miner's park.



Upper trail using the boardwalk at the miner's park.



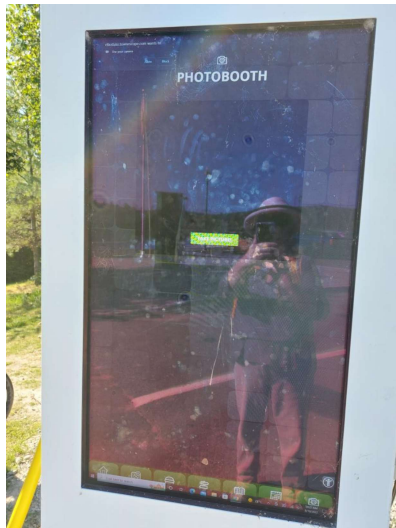
Looking back.



The interactive sign for tourists that includes a "photo booth."

It didn't seem to work, even though it had oodles of text and some instructions, like ...use your phone...after you pushed the "take a picture" button.

This is an example of the opposite challenge of signage - a sign must not only be present but must be understood. The Advisory Committee could provide some guidance when signage is designed, even the electronic kind. We could act as a test group before the product is launched on the general public.



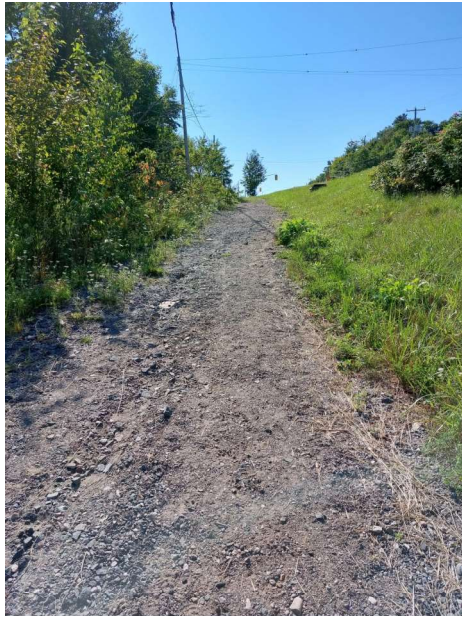
The return route to the trail-head as seen from miner's park.

My last detour was a path that led to the mining artefact. Again no explanatory sign.



Maintenance required on the path
down from the mining artefact.

I saw a sign on the highway at the
entrance to this part of the trail. I
went to see how useful it was to a
hiker.



I called this a cinder trail in my first photos, but it is actually gravel and hard packed earth. You can see the stoplights on the horizon indicating that I am moments from the trail-head.

These photos illustrate that there are many spots along the way that are amenable to public art of some sort. Any art installed should be tagged with the artist, the title of the piece, installation date, and if necessary an explanation for interaction or not, and any use warnings that the city lawyers suggest.

The addition of signs for the art pieces are going to underscore the absence of signs currently available, so I suggest that standards for signage be developed and that budgets include trail signs as well as art signs to connect the art and the activity visually.

A FINAL OBSERVATION: A lack of comfort facilities. If the trail is developed into an And-do, then visitors will be lingering longer. Comfort facilities need to be included in the development.