

Active Pursuits SUE LEBRECHT

Take a hike — along Ontario's beautiful Haliburton Highlands

There are many ways to spin a hike as Haliburton Highlands will demonstrate at its first-ever hiking festival starting today and running through Sunday.

The creative menu of options includes guided tours on the themes of geology, food, plants, trees and scat. There's a GPS scavenger hunt, a llama trek, a tour of a fish hatchery that re-

leases 10,000-year-old species of trout, a boardwalk through treetops, and the introduction of two new trails, the Ridge and the Circuit of the Five Viewpoints.

"The intent is to draw upon the broadest range of interests, so whether you're a senior, a parent with kids, or if you want to walk your dog, or have an educa-

tional experience, we'll have a hike for you," said Carol Moffatt, marketing coordinator for Haliburton Highlands.

A tour called "Gems Beneath your Boots", being led by geologist and Ministry of Natural Resources educator John Etches, features hikes to see the globally rare mineral of "fluorrricht-rite".

The festival, presented by the Haliburton Highlands Trails and Tours Network in conjunction with the local Chamber of Commerce, is being launched with the objective to generate awareness about the region's natural recreational playground, particularly in autumn.

The collection of trail systems is featured in a brochure called

"Haliburton Highlands Trails", available free from the Chamber of Commerce.

The brochure provides an overview map of locations, along with brief descriptions, phone numbers and Web sites. Small icons identify the types of activity available at each location, including inline skating, horseback riding and wheel-

chair accessibility.

★ For more information, visit www.trailsandtours.on.ca, call 705-489-4049 or contact the Chamber of Commerce at 1-800-461-7677 or 705-286-1760 or visit www.county.haliburton.on.ca.

Sue Lebrecht is a Toronto-based freelance writer.