

# THE GREAT WATERFRONT TRAIL ADVENTURE

## A BEGINNER'S GUIDE

**Are you new to the ride this year? This is the resource for you!**

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Great Lakes  
Waterfront Trail

A Legacy Initiative of the Waterfront Regeneration Trust and its Partners

PROTECT  
CONNECT  
CELEBRATE

# What is the Great Waterfront Trail Adventure (GWTA)?

The **Great Waterfront Trail Adventure** is an annual event organized by the Waterfront Regeneration Trust in collaboration with our partner communities along the **Great Lakes Waterfront Trail**.

The Waterfront Regeneration Trust is a charity organization dedicated to the completion and enhancement of the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail, as a key step in regenerating our waterfront. The ride serves several purposes:

- **Showcasing Trail progress & community partnerships**
- **Raising awareness & support for Trail expansion and enhancement**
- **Promotes the Trail as a top-tier cycling & tourism experience**
- **Inspires stewardship of our Great Lakes & St. Lawrence River**



## Okay... but what is the event in practical terms?

The **Great Waterfront Trail Adventure (GWTA)** is a multi-day supported cycling tour of sections of the **Great Lakes Waterfront Trail (GLWT, aka The Trail)**. As one of about 150 participants, you will cycle on average 70–100km per day as you travel between overnight locations, stopping in communities along the way to enjoy meals, sight-seeing, and other activities both organized and spontaneous. The **GWTA** is a tourism event, and we strongly encourage you to make your own stops to enjoy everything **The Trail** has to offer. Ice cream, breweries, and trips to the beach are all popular choices.

## What ‘Support’ does the Ride Offer?

Support on the Ride comes in three main forms:

### Luggage Support

Each morning, you will drop off your luggage and/or camping gear with staff, who will transport it ahead of you to your next overnight location. This way, you only need to carry what you need with you during the day on your bike.

### Rest Stops

There are scheduled rest stops along the route each day. This includes coordinated rest stops hosted by communities along the route, as well as roadside stops with water, snacks, and mechanical assistance provided by event staff and volunteers.

### Staff and Volunteers

The **GWTA** has a wonderful group of staff and volunteers who help things run smoothly. If you run into a problem while riding for the day, we will be there to assist.

# Provided Resources

## Printed Maps and Itineraries

This is the most important resource in your toolbox. Starting in the weeks leading up to the **GWTA**, itineraries are always available online on our website—[www.waterfronttrail.org](http://www.waterfronttrail.org). Additionally, each evening you will be provided with a printed copy of the map and daily itinerary for the coming day's cycling route. Campers will pick this up from the Info Tent at Base Camp, while those staying in hotels can pick them up from the front desk at check-in.

Your itinerary includes everything you need to know for the coming day. It outlines rest stops, planned activities, group meals, available shuttles, trail cautions, optional routes, accommodation addresses, and any other important information. If you are uncertain of something, your itinerary should be the first place you check!

**As organizers, the daily itinerary is our primary method of communicating with you. It's definitely worth a read!**

The print maps are not a replacement for the itineraries, but they do also include some important notes and markers. Even if you do not use these as your primary method of navigation, they're helpful for reviewing the coming route, as well as locating local or event-specific amenities like Base Camp, rest stops, or group dinners.

## Ride with GPS:



Ride with GPS is an essential cycling navigation app with turn-by-turn voice navigation. Each day's route is uploaded to Ride with GPS and made available to participants in the weeks leading up to the **GWTA**.

**Note:** Ride with GPS allows you to download the route as .kml data, which can then be used to follow the route in a different wayfinding app if you prefer.

Links to the **GWTA** route on Ride with GPS will be provided in the weeks leading up to the event. You may want to set up an account and practice using the app before the ride.

Each year we try to arrange a virtual meeting with a representative from Ride with GPS to go over how to use the app. Watch your email for updates if you are interested in attending.

# Staff and Volunteers

## Waterfront Regeneration Trust Staff

On the **GWTA**, the Waterfront Regeneration Trust has a team of four staff members:

**Executive Director - Marlane Koehler**

**Program Director - David Meyer**  
(Tour Road Support/Wayfinding)

**Tour Director - Joanne Sharland**

**Camp Manager - Leanne Linetsky**

During the ride, you may see some of us more than others. When you don't see us, we are probably setting up signs, organizing aspects of the ride, delivering luggage, preparing camp, addressing concerns, or some other behind-the-scenes task necessary to make things run smoothly.

## Volunteers

Our cycling volunteers will be riding the route along with you throughout the day, and can be identified on the road by their bright pinnies. Our volunteers are happy to assist, and can get in touch with staff for any issues that can't be solved on their own.

Some volunteers have special roles:

### Leads

Our 2 leads wear green pinnies, and set out early to ride ahead of other cyclists. They are able to give us a heads up of any unforeseen trail complications, as well as help staff gauge the timing of the earliest arriving cyclists throughout the day.

### Sweeps

Each day we have 2 sweeps in red pinnies. They bring up the rear behind our other cyclists. They help us keep track of participants to ensure no one is left behind.

### Medic

Our volunteer medic is trained in first aid and equipped with basic medical gear. **Please remember that in the case of a medical emergency, your first step is always to call 911.**



An example of volunteer pinnies.

## CAA Mechanical Support

Gershom is our knowledgeable CAA mechanic, who has been joining us on the ride for many years. If you have any issues with your bike, or just want a quick check-up or tire top-off, Gershom will be able to assist you. He is often set up at various rest stops throughout the day, as well as at Base Camp.

# When in Trouble

If you're on the road and find yourself in trouble, there are tools at your disposal.

## Signal a Support Vehicle

To signal a passing support vehicle that you need help, raise your hand high in the air in a fist. We can recognize this as distinct from a wave, and will know you need assistance.

## Ask a Volunteer for Help

Volunteers can be identified by their coloured pinnies. You can always ask them for assistance with navigation or other concerns—even if they aren't able to help you personally, they can help you determine the best course of action, as well as reach out to **GWTA** staff if appropriate.

## Call Support

There are a few important numbers you should keep on hand while on the road.

If no one picks up right away when you call **GWTA** staff, send a text and/or leave a message—we may be driving or on another call and not able to pick up immediately. Make sure to identify yourself (name and bike plate number) and your current location.

- Jo Sharland - Tour Director **905-510-4614**
- Marlaine Koehler - Executive Director **416-520-4205**
- **Emergency Services 911**

Always remember that in a medical emergency, the first thing you should do is call 911. Our **GWTA** medic is not a replacement for emergency services.

## Tools to Minimize Chance of Trouble

### Navigating

It's easier to check that you're still on route than to try to navigate back to the route if you get lost. Review the route the night before, and make use of Ride with GPS so you can see your location in proximity to the route in real time.

### Stay Hydrated

It's easy to become dehydrated on the road. Always fill your water bottle in the morning, ideally 2 for hot days, and drink frequently. Keep your bottles topped off throughout the day.

### Pacing Yourself

When riding longer days, breaking the total distance into parts can help you manage and stay motivated. Rather than worrying over riding 100km, frame it as four 25km rides, with a coffee break, a lunch break, and a shade break in between. Look up, enjoy the scenery, and visit unique spots along the way!

# Wayfinding on the Trail

## The Great Lakes Waterfront Trail—What You're Watching For.

The **GWTA** route is a tour of sections of the **Great Lakes Waterfront Trail**. This means that our route for the event primarily follows an existing trail with permanent signage infrastructure, which looks like this:



On older sections of the Trail, you may see signs that look like this.

On the **GWTA**, you are usually travelling on the **Great Lakes Waterfront Trail**. These are the signs you should primarily be watching for.

## Alternate Signed Trails:

Sometimes, we will use another signed trail as a connection. This will be noted on your Printed Maps, Itinerary, and Ride with GPS. In such sections, you may be temporarily following different signage. Common examples include:



## Event Signage:

To supplement existing trail signage, and/or in places where the **GWTA** route deviates from existing trails, we use temporary Event Signage to indicate turns. **Event Signage takes priority over all other signage.** It looks like this:



# An Average Day On the Ride



**The Night Prior:** You will have received your itinerary and maps for the next day's ride when you arrived at your accommodations, either at the front desk of your hotel, or from the info tent at Base Camp. Hopefully you'll have given it a quick look before going to bed!

## Before Breakfast

Pack up your bag (and tent if you are camping) and drop it off with the volunteer/**GWTA** staff at your accommodation. They will usually be in front of the hotel. Campers should bring their bags directly to the Luggage Truck on-site. Check your itinerary for specific instructions.

## Breakfast

Check your itinerary for information on breakfast timing and location. Generally, if you are staying in a hotel you will eat an included breakfast there. Campers eat at a group venue near to the campsite. Breakfast is between 7am and 8am usually.

Breakfast is also a good time to go over the day's maps and itinerary if you didn't already do so the night before.

## Cycling

**GWTA** cyclists spread out and ride at their own pace. Check your maps and itinerary for scheduled rest stops and other notes. Remember, the **GWTA** is not a race, and we encourage you to take your time and make your own stops along the way. Use the scheduled rest stops and times listed in your itinerary to assess whether you are making adequate progress throughout day. You don't need to rush, but you should be reaching rest stops before they close.

## Lunch

Some meals are included as part of the tour. Any included meals for the day will be listed in your itinerary along with the location, time, and any pertinent information.

If no group meal is listed, then you are expected to find your own meals in local communities. Check your itinerary for recommended lunch stops en route.

## Overnight Location

**GWTA** routing and maps will lead you to the **GWTA** Base Camp. If you are camping, this is your final destination for the day. Visit the Info Tent for site information and to pick up tomorrow's itinerary and maps. (See *Camping: Base Camp* on p.11 for more details)

If you are staying in a hotel, you will continue riding to your accommodations, where you will pick up tomorrow's itinerary and maps from the front desk at check-in.

## Dinner

Check your itinerary to see if there is an included group dinner for the evening. If dinner is on your own, you can check your itinerary for suggested restaurants in the area.

# Hotel Accommodations

## Supported Accommodations

The **GWTA** has a list of *supported accommodations* each day. Hotels booked through CAA as part of your **GWTA** registration are all supported.

A “supported” accommodation means we have pre-arranged to deliver your luggage ahead of you to that location.

If you are staying in a supported hotel, your bags will be delivered ahead of you by **GWTA** staff. Usually bags are unloaded and stored in an empty conference room/event space provided by the hotel.

## Checking In

When you check-in, you will show hotel staff your wristband, let them know you are with the **GWTA** cycling event, and ask them where to pick up your luggage. **Make sure to also pick up tomorrow’s itinerary and maps from the front desk!**

## Morning Luggage Pick-up

In the morning, you will bring your luggage to be picked up by the luggage truck. Check your itinerary for the time and place your luggage must be dropped off at.

## Breakfast

Most mornings, participants staying in hotels will get breakfast from their hotel. Check your itinerary for details.

## Unsupported Accommodations

If you plan to stay at an unsupported location, such as an unsupported hotel/Air B&B or staying with a local friend, **you must inform and make arrangements with GWTA staff.**

We will do our best to provide support to participants staying in accommodations not included in the list of supported accommodations, but special arrangements may be necessary, and participants are responsible for making these arrangements by talking to **GWTA** staff.

In most cases, unsupported locations will be handled in one of 3 ways:

### Option 1: Your Luggage Remains on the Luggage Truck Overnight

This option is the simplest logistically. When you start your day, you will take anything you need for that night or tomorrow with you in your pannier/backpack for the day's ride and inform **GWTA** staff to leave your bag on the locked luggage truck overnight.

### Option 2: GWTA Staff Agrees to support your Overnight Location

Depending on the proximity of your unsupported accommodation, **GWTA** staff may agree to drop your bags off at your unsupported location. However, **you are responsible for the following:**

- Clear communication with **GWTA** staff
- As luggage is delivered ahead of you early in the day, you must make arrangements with the proprietor to ensure that they are prepared to receive and securely store luggage when **GWTA** staff arrive several hours before your check-in time.
- Similarly, you must plan with the proprietor to have luggage available for pick-up after you have left the following morning. The **GWTA** luggage truck will collect luggage from supported accommodations first, so you will start the day's ride, leaving your bag with the proprietor until **GWTA** staff arrives to pick it up.

### Option 3: Luggage is Delivered to Base Camp, You Make Your Own Arrangements

If **GWTA** staff are unable to deliver to your unsupported accommodation, your luggage will be brought to the **GWTA** Base Camp. From here you can make your own arrangements, such as calling a taxi (local taxi numbers can be found in your daily itinerary) or being picked up by a local friend.

Please keep in mind:

- We ask that you please communicate your plans with **GWTA** staff even if you're making your own arrangements.
- If **GWTA** staff has not agreed to support your accommodation, **you are expected to get your luggage to the nearest supported accommodation or Base Camp in time for it to be loaded onto the luggage truck in the morning** (see times listed in the daily itinerary).

# CAMPING



# Camping: Base Camp

If you signed up as a camper, here's what you need to know about the **GWTA** Base Camp.

## Where is Base Camp?

Base Camp is the final destination of all **GWTA** routing materials, including printed maps and Ride with GPS routes. Base Camp sites are generously provided by our community partners and are located within biking distance of town.

**GWTA** Base Camps are often not formal campgrounds. Past locations have included parks, arena spaces (both indoors and outdoors), marinas, and community centres, in addition to actual campgrounds.

**Note:** On rare occasions where it is not possible to easily bike to local amenities from camp, shuttles will be arranged for campers. Check your itinerary or the Info Tent at Base Camp for any important notes. Local taxi numbers are also included in your itinerary.

## What To Do When You Reach Camp

### Info Tent

Once you arrive, your first stop should be to visit the Info Tent, marked by the large white canopy with the Waterfront Regeneration Trust logo. Here you can pick up tomorrow's itinerary and maps, and read the whiteboard for site information including:

- Washroom/Shower Locations
- Dinner Details (Group Dinner or On-Your-Own)
- Shuttle Schedule (When Applicable)
- Other Site Information

### Luggage

Your luggage will have been delivered to camp ahead of you. Locate your luggage and then find a place to set up.

### Set Up Your Tent

The Info Tent will have information on where you can set up your tent. Once you've found your luggage, simply pick a spot and begin setting up. Communal tools like hammers and electric air pumps are available at camp—check by either the Info Tent or the Charging Station.

## What Amenities Can I Expect at Camp?

Base Camp will always have the following amenities:

- Washrooms
- Showers
- Charging Station
- Water
- Electric Pumps (for inflating air mattresses)
- Bike pump
- Kettle (bring your own tea, hot chocolate, instant coffee)
- Hammer (for tent pegs)
- Bug spray

We ask that participants be patient and respectful of shared resources.

### A Note on Charging

The average number of camping participants is 50. The average person will want to charge at least 2 devices at the end of the day.

Though the Charging Station can accommodate many devices there will always be a limited number of outlets, so we ask that participants please be considerate of one another in the following ways:

- **Priority charging is given to E-Bike Batteries.**  
Cyclists using E-bikes must charge their battery in order to participate in the next day's ride. If an outlet or tower is marked as reserved for E-bikes, E-bike batteries take priority over any other devices charging.
- **Attend to your devices.**  
Once charged, promptly unplug your devices to create space for others.
- **Try to limit the number of devices you charge at once.**  
Please limit the number of devices you charge at a time to a maximum of 2 per person in order to leave space for others and to speed up the process.

#### NOTICE



Leaving devices unsupervised is done at your own risk.



# Camping: Packing

## Bags

Camping participants are allowed two bags of luggage on the luggage truck—one for personal effects, and one for your tent/camping gear. Make sure that any bag which will be transported in the luggage truck has one of your two luggage tags received at registration securely attached to it in a clearly visible location.

Please do your best to pack lightly for the tour. As a rule of thumb, you should be able to lift your bag up as high as your chest, or carry it for 5 minutes—while you will never need to ride with your luggage, you will have to move it from the luggage truck to wherever you are pitching your tent nearby.

Packing lightly when possible is also considerate of staff; you only have to move your own bag, but a few staff will be loading and unloading over 200 pieces of luggage each day across camp and hotels. We appreciate if you're able to leave your collection of heritage brickwork at home.

## Waterproofing

If you are camping, your luggage should be waterproof.

We take care to keep your luggage covered from rain, but when camping it's simply a fact that things will get wet. Even without rain, in the morning tents covered in dew will get packed up onto the luggage truck alongside your bags, and they are going to drip onto one another.

Fortunately, there's an easy, cost-effective way to ensure your luggage is waterproof without the need for a fancy camping bag:



Garbage bags. When you start packing, put a garbage bag into your luggage bag and pack any clothing or belongings that need to stay dry into it. Then simply twist the bag closed at the top, tuck it in, and congratulations—your bag is now waterproof!

**Q: Why not just put the garbage bag around the outside of my bag? Then everything, including the bag, will stay dry!**

**A: Two reasons—**

Firstly, a garbage bag on the outside is almost certainly going to rip at some point.

Secondly, if you wrap your bag in a garbage bag, staff will not be able to easily see your luggage tag to identify your bag. This risks us missing your bag during unloading.

It won't matter that the outside of your bag gets wet if the inside is waterproofed.

## What to Bring

Most campers are going to have 3 bags. A bag for their tent/camping gear and a duffel bag or suitcase for clothes and toiletries—both of which will go on the luggage truck each day—and one smaller pannier or backpack they will ride with.



### Tent/Camping Equipment

Your tent bag should have:

- Your tent
- A tarp/groundsheet
- Tent pegs
- A pillow
- An air mattress
- A sleeping bag

There are communal electric air pumps and hammers supplied at Base Camp.

### Tip

Anything sharing a bag with your tent that you don't want to get wet, such as your pillow and sleeping bag, should be packed in a garbage bag first to waterproof it.



### Personal Bag

Your personal bag will have mostly clothes and toiletries. Some suggestions:

- Your preferred riding clothes
- Casual clothes to change into at the end of the day and for dinners
- A sweater or coat
- Long pants (for cool evenings and bugs)
- Rain gear (we ride rain or shine)
- Extra socks
- A swimsuit (we're on the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail, you may want to take a dip!)



### Backpack/Pannier

For any items you want to have with you during the day. Examples:

- Your wallet
- Your phone and charger
- Your raincoat/layers
- Sunscreen
- Other electronics
- Items too delicate for the luggage truck
- Items you purchase while on the road

# Tips from the Camp Manager



## A Good Time to Shower is Often Shortly After Reaching Camp

There are a limited number of shower facilities at our campsites. Most days, participants will be staggered out along the route and will arrive at camp at different times. If you shower shortly after setting up, there are fewer people trying to shower at once and ultimately shorter wait times for all.



## Optimize Charging

Electrical outlets are always in high demand at camp. If you make a stop in a cafe for lunch or a rest, take the opportunity to charge your devices a bit while there. This will make any charging you have to do at camp that much quicker.



## Don't Forget Local Taxis

If you check the end of the last page of your daily itinerary, you'll find the number for local taxis in each of our overnight locations. Want to go into town for dinner but don't feel like cycling, or want to bring something back with you to camp? Calling a taxi is a good option to keep in mind.



## The Kettle

Base Camp has a variety of basic tools and supplies you can take advantage of, among them an electric kettle. If you bring some tea, instant coffee, hot chocolate, or even oatmeal, you can make yourself a little evening treat without having to go out into town.



## The Secret of the Info Tent

You should always check the board at the Info Tent when you get to camp for site information, but the secret of the Info Tent is that most of the information you'll find there was with you all along—in your daily itinerary! Even after you're done riding for the day, if you're unsure of something, check the itinerary!