

Status of the 2021 Winter Coach Program

Bus cost

- Coach Canada has offered us a rate of \$800 + HST = \$904 per trip for all destinations except Arrowhead Provincial Park. This is for a 56-seat coach.
- In 2020 we charged \$32 per person. With the \$904 rate we could limit the number of participants to 30 paying, not increase the coach fare, and still cover our bus costs (30 X \$32 = \$960). TBTC is considering a bus fare of \$35 per person to give us a buffer and allow us to cover any last-minute cancellations.
- Pacific Western, our regular carrier, doesn't appear to be operating at this time. They haven't responded to any of TBTC's requests for information.

Strong support from hike leaders

- Our hike leaders and trainees are keen to keep the winter program going in 2021. Seventy-five per cent of those who were asked said they would be willing to lead snowshoe hikes and act as bus captains. Many offered to lead more than one trip.

What the members are saying

- In early September TBTC sent a survey out to all who participated in the winter coach program in 2020. Here are the results:
 - 52 % of respondents said they are comfortable riding the bus and would participate.
 - 16 % of respondents were undecided.
 - 32 % of respondents said they will not participate in 2021 (they will not travel on a bus until a vaccine for COVID-19 is available).

Day trips

- Under current regulations we can't run any coach trips (for tour operators groups sizes must be limited to 25 outdoors and 10 indoors). We don't know what the situation will be like in January. We need to be flexible. TBTC will defer the decision or plan a few trips and then cancel them if the situation warrants it. Getting outside is important for everyone's mental and physical health. Many people don't have cars; this would give them an opportunity to get out of the city.
- If the first trips go well and COVID-19 numbers are low, we could add more trips on short notice.

Val-David weekend trip

This trip is cancelled. Members' interest in a weekend coach trip in 2021 is low. We cannot run such a trip with a half full bus, and we would be spending too much time in the bus together.

Additional information

Measures Coach Canada is taking to reduce the spread of COVID-19 among passengers

- They are doing everything possible to inject fresh air into the bus during trips.
- They are doing extra cleaning of their buses and drivers are sanitizing high touch surfaces throughout the day.

Measures the Toronto Bruce Trail Club could take to reduce the spread of COVID-19

- Require all participants to wear masks at all times while on the bus.
- Ask participants to refrain from singing or loud talking while on the bus, and encourage participants to keep talking to a minimum.
- Reduce the number of passengers on the bus from 56 to between 30 and 40 to allow some physical distancing.
- Allow participants to cancel at the last minute without penalty if they have any COVID-19 symptoms or have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- We could shorten the day by 30 to 60 minutes to reduce the amount of time people spend indoors.

Measures resorts are taking to prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- Some resorts, like Mansfield, are setting up heated outdoor spaces.
- Other resorts, like Highlands Nordic and Scenic Caves are limiting the number of people that can enter their chalets at one time. They will be selling trail passes at a window.
- We may have to stagger our lunch breaks and use the bus to store our gear and/or eat our lunches.

Martina Furrer, Coordinator Winter Coach Program

David Royle, Hiking Director

October 20 2020