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Official launch of Upland Nature Guides

Outdoor business offers guided day hikes across Ontario's highlands

Griffith, Greater Madawaska: August 2026 marks the official launch of Upland Nature Guides Inc., a new outdoor business based in Renfrew County. Upland offers guided day hikes across Ontario's highlands from Haliburton to the Ottawa Valley, explains head guide Jeff Priest. "We visit wild places away from the crowds and explore nature together. Upland handles all the planning so clients can enjoy an unforgettable hike."

As a hiker, paddler, naturalist and photographer Priest has spent years travelling trails around the region. "What always struck me," he says of the beautiful places he would find, "was how few people I encountered there." So he started Upland Nature Guides as a way to share these places responsibly.

Upland hosts twice-weekly outings that are three to six hours long, easily paced and appropriate for a wide range of abilities. Most of all, Priest emphasizes, they're fun! Each trip is like a scavenger hunt where everyone makes discoveries. From birds to butterflies, native wildflowers to rare mushrooms, hikers will get ID tips and interesting info about the diverse wildlife they encounter.

Upland also hosts monthly low-barrier hikes at accessible locations on the region's rail trails, offering new hikers and people with disabilities an authentic, affordable nature experience. "If you're new to nature," says Priest, "we'll help build up your skills and comfort, because the outdoors belong to everyone."

"Have fun, learn, and get away from the crowds for a more authentic nature experience with Upland Nature Guides." –Jeff Priest

For more information on Upland Nature Guides and our upcoming schedule of hikes, please see the [Upland Nature website](#). Photo assets [available here](#).



Jeff Priest is a naturalist and outdoor guide based in the Ottawa Valley. As Upland's head guide, Jeff delights in sharing the best of Ontario's highlands with people from far and wide. He has documented over 15,000 observations of local flora and fauna, including 2,400+ confirmed species and at least one first in Canada. Jeff's nature photography appears in books, periodicals and magazines.

Certifications:

- Hike Ontario Certified Hike Leader
- Ontario Master Naturalist Certificate Program
- Affiliate Member, Interpretive Guides Association
- iNaturalist Ambassador
- Canadian Red Cross Standard and Wilderness/Remote First Aid Certified

Member:

- Field Botanists of Ontario
- Toronto Entomologists' Association
- Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists
- Pembroke Area Field Naturalists
- Kingston Field Naturalists
- Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust

Available for expert commentary, podcast segments and media interviews.
For more on Jeff, please see [Upland Nature Guides: About Us](#).