



I only went out for a walk and finally concluded to stay out till sundown, for going out, I found, was really going in.

~John Muir

Annual Report



2009 - 2010

Get Outside. Get Healthy. Hike.

Trails have multiple values and their benefits reach far beyond recreation. Trails can enrich the quality of life for individuals, make communities more livable, and protect, nurture, and showcase America's grandeur by traversing areas of natural beauty, distinctive geography, historic significance, and ecological diversity. Trails are important for the nation's health, economy, resource protection and education.

Trails for All Americans Report, 1990

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HIKE ONTARIO GOVERNANCE

Throughout the years Hike Ontario has had one goal – to encourage walking, hiking and trail development in Ontario.

Established in 1974, Hike Ontario is a non-profit, charitable organization governed and operated by volunteers. We are the sole provider of province-wide hiking information and services. Hike Ontario is also unique amongst Canada's provinces and territories in many of the services it provides to this province's hiking associations and citizens. Eighty-five percent of Canadians walk for leisure and recreation. Thus, Hike Ontario acts as the voice for over 10 million hikers and walkers in Ontario.

Hike Ontario recognizes and supports trails throughout Ontario and appreciates that every trail is unique. Every trail can't be all things to all people but all trails can play beneficial roles. Trails play roles in the economy, play roles in the environment and perhaps most importantly, play roles in our health.

While Hike Ontario recognizes the diversity of trails and trail uses, our focus is on the representation and promotion of pedestrian based trails and their benefits, focusing specifically on connectivity, economics, education, environmental, health, heritage, recreation and transportation.

Hike Ontario does not make or maintain trails, nor does it offer organized hiking/walking events, except through its member associations. Hike Ontario is the umbrella organization that provides these province-wide associations with resources and services to build on these long-established local and regional initiatives in a way in which complements and enhances them.

Our core objectives:

- To encourage walking for recreation, transportation and health
- To encourage and facilitate trail development for walking and hiking throughout Ontario
- To encourage good trail maintenance and hiking practices and the enhancement and quality of the
- walking experience
- To encourage and facilitate the development of trail building hiking clubs in Ontario
- To act as an advocate for a club or clubs when requested or when an initiative is deemed necessary
- To encourage education and research into the health benefits and other aspects of recreational
- walking

- To encourage conservation and appreciation of the natural environment
- To maintain and disseminate information on hiking and hiking trails

Our Core Programs:

- Advocacy and Government Relations
- Ambassador Program
- Best Practices for Increasing Trail Usage by Hikers and Walkers
- Hike Leader Certification Program
- Insurance Provision and Risk Management
- Young Hikers Program
- Safe Hikers Program
- Long Distance Awards Program
- Annual Hike Ontario Summit
- Sponsor of Ontario Hiking Week
- Partnerships and Linkages

Program Descriptions

Advocacy and Government Relations: Hike Ontario is an active voice and resource to our government partners in the Ontario trails community. We play a lead role in promoting, educating about and advocating pedestrian trail experiences through an active presence at local, regional, provincial and national trail events. We do this through strategic planning processes, active communications, conference and workshop participation, information distribution, special events and educational campaigns.

Ambassador Program: Hike Ontario Ambassadors provide information on hiking and hiking trails across Ontario by promoting Hike Ontario and our member clubs to new and novice hikers across the province. As the number one source of province-wide information and resources about hiking, walking and pedestrian based trail development and management in Ontario, our Ambassadors provide this resource by doing presentations to clubs and community groups, training individuals and providing materials.

Best Practices for Increasing Trail Usage by Hikers and Walkers: Hike Ontario engaged in researching and collecting data on the strategies, methods and opportunities for increasing use of trails by walkers and hikers and was able to then publish a comprehensive manual of Best Practices. This manual is most useful for Hiking and Walking organizations, Parks and Recreation staff,

Conservation Area & Parks staff, Municipalities and a broad range of Special Interest groups (Health Units, Resorts, private landowners, trail builders etc.)

Hike Leader Certification Program: Hike Ontario has developed standards and training programs for Hike Leaders that are used by our member clubs, community colleges, universities, activity clubs and outdoor training organizations for course delivery. Currently, Hike Ontario offers Standard Hike Leader, Youth Hike Leader and Wilderness Day Hike Leader certification courses.

Insurance Provision and Risk Management: Hike Ontario works diligently with its trail partners and insurance providers to provide the best possible policy conditions to suit the needs of its trail clubs. This in turn is working towards managing for safe and sustainable trails systems throughout Ontario for the pleasure of walkers and hikers. Hike Ontario plays a key role in risk management through our dedication to pursuing best practices, sound advice and proactively engaging in and encouraging safe practices and education.

Young Hikers Program: The Young Hikers Program aspires to introduce youth to the joys and benefits of hiking, through a variety of mediums such as Activity Resource Kit, Provincial Youth Advisory Committee, Youth Hike Leader Certification, Youth Risk Management Training and youth volunteer opportunities.

Safe Hikers Program: This one day course introduces the new or novice hiker to the joys and benefits of hiking, walking and the trails of Ontario. Special focus is placed on safety, sustainability and enjoyment. Upon completion, participants are armed with the knowledge necessary to keep themselves safe while hiking; how to ensure their hikes are environmentally and socially sustainable and will help them develop the confidence necessary to join hiking groups and/or go on their own hikes.

Long Distance Awards Program: Hike Ontario has a mandate to encourage hiking for all ages and all athletic levels throughout Ontario. The Long Distance Hiker Awards celebrate dedicated hikers who have logged long distances on multiple Ontario trails. Hike Ontario offers three long distance hiking awards; the Red Pine Award for 550 kms, the Trillium Award for 900 kms and the Tamarack Award for 1500 kms.

Annual Hike Ontario Summit: Held annually in October, our Summit is a weekend long event that features timely workshops, presentations, award presentations, guest speakers, and a full schedule of invigorating hikes.

Sponsor of Ontario Hiking Week: Every year from October 1–7, Hike Ontario sponsors Ontario Hiking Week, encouraging people of all ages to get out and hike the many trails of this beautiful province. Ontario Hiking Week demonstrates the many faces of hiking and walking – as a recreational activity that’s low impact, affordable to all, and promotes environmental sustainability and ecological awareness.

Partnerships and Linkages: Hike Ontario has formed and sustains strong ties with both government and nongovernmental partners related to pedestrian trails. We strive to represent the interests of all hikers and walkers, trail clubs and all pedestrian based trail interests throughout Ontario. Hike Ontario represents the interests of hikers and walkers on the Ontario Trails Council (OTC) Board of Directors and the through a nominated representative to the Hike Canada En Marche Board of Directors.

Mission

To encourage walking, hiking and trail development in Ontario.

Vision

Hike Ontario seeks to maintain and develop its unique position as the number one source of province-wide information and resources about hiking, walking and pedestrian based trail development and management in Ontario.

Governance Structure

Hike Ontario is governed by a board of directors that meets four times per year at various locations across Ontario. Our board consists of approx. 35 people.

80% of the board members are appointed to represent their member club (i.e. the Bruce Trail) with the remaining members being elected at our Annual General Meetings.

The executive committee of the board additionally meets once a month. The executive consists of President, Vice President, Past President, Treasurer and Secretary. Additionally, the Chairs of each standing committee hold a position on the executive committee.

Executive Committee 2009 –2010

Tom Friesen	President
Bill Wilson	Vice President
Asvin Parsad	Treasurer
Angela Liu	Secretary
Terri LeRoux	Ontario Trails Council Representative
Freida Baldwin	Ontario Trails Council Representative
David Francis	Hike Canada Representative
Brendan Zamojc	Hike Canada Representative

Standing Committees 2009-2010

David Francis	Certification Committee
Victoria Arshad	Public Education Committee
Bill Wilson	Issues, Policy & Advocacy Committee
Luis Costa	Fund Raising Committee

Brendan Zamojc Planning and Development Committee

Board Members – as appointed by our Member Clubs

Lisa Venier	Algoma Highlands Conservancy
Karen LeFrancois Hill	Avon Trail
Ken Magee	Bayfield River Valley Trail
Ron Knight	Bighead River Heritage Association (Trout Hollow Trail)
Ron Scanlon	Bruce Trail Association
Mary Perkins	Durham Outdoors Club
Naomi Armstrong	Elgin Hiking Trail Club
Raymond Soucy	Elora Cataract Trailway Association
Michael Samarelli, Sophia Wouters	Friends of the Seaton Trail Association
Bill Gray	Friends of the Trail Inc (Quinte)
David Beevis	Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association
Ruth Oswald	Grand Valley Trails Association
Mike Curtis	Guelph Hiking Trail Club
Jerry Gorman	Humber Valley Heritage Trail Association
Frieda Baldwin	Huron Trails & Greenways & North Simcoe Rail Trail
Ron Fletcher	Lost River Walks, North Toronto Green Community
Wendy Hoernig	Maitland Trail Association
Marvin Morison	Nastawgan Trails
Frieda Baldwin	North Simcoe Rail Trail
Josh Matlow	North Toronto Green Community
Stan Butcher	Oak Ridges Trail Association
Barbara Burrows	Palmerston Trail Association Inc
Ron Hunt	Rideau Trail Association
Diana Smyth	Rouge Park Trail Club
Paul Mackle	Street To Trail Association
Maureen McGauley	Thames Valley Trail Association
Laurie Hocevar	Thunder Bay Hiking Association
Carole Blaquiére	Voyageur Trail Association
Peter Van Dyk	4 Day Evening Walk Committee

COMPASS 2010, Our Strategic Plan. Moving Towards COMPASS 2015

With the publication of COMPASS 2010, Hike Ontario articulated its collective vision to strengthen and build new partnerships, to seek opportunities and to promote initiatives that translate our vision, values and strategies into action.

This document represents a roadmap for the future. Our evolution as an organization will be guided by the framework that this document provides. By describing the benefits we can collectively work toward, and the outcomes that we are seeking to accomplish, this document provides a management framework that we can all commit to.

In sync with current trends in Ontario such as the Ontario Trails Strategy and Active 2010, COMPASS 2010, provides our organization with a measurable blueprint for action.

Our priorities as a provincial alliance of hiking clubs and trail management agencies and the emphasis that we place on our critical objectives may shift over time in response to many factors, both internal to and external from the organization itself. Yet, establishing an agreed-upon course of action is the first step to achieving our goals, individually and collectively. We invite you to work with Hike Ontario to support our efforts.

Hike Ontario board members have a shared responsibility of ensuring the implementation of our strategic plan and that all the work we undertake is within the scope of our identified priorities:

Serving More People

Hike Ontario's vision is to be a voice for all Ontarians; reaching more people with our important programs and services.

Our goals include: Review of Individual Membership Program; Enhancing our ability to be a resource for hiking related information; Engaging more youth and Broadening our Outreach and Communication methodologies.

Delivering Service Excellence

Ensuring optimum delivery of relevant, timely services is necessary for Hike Ontario to define its role as a provincial reference.

Our goals include: Expand upon existing Risk Management Program; Delivery of a Sustainable and Affordable Insurance / Liability Program; Expand upon existing Hike Leader Certification Program and; Enhance Long Distance Awards Program.

Strengthening the Hiking & Walking Community

The promotion, advocacy and support of the hiking and walking community can do much to strengthen its presence and role in Ontario and Hike Ontario is committed to facilitating this through our voice and programs.

Our goals include: To better advocate our position on trail related issues; To enhance our relationship with our Member Clubs and; to make a strong investment and commitment to establishing new partnerships.

Developing Effective Organizational Systems

The development of effective organizational supports and systems allow for the effective management of our goals, allowing us to appropriately achieve all of our important objectives.

Our goals include: To streamline accounting and bookkeeping methodologies; to streamline administrative functions and; to embrace a modern governance model.

Achieving Sustainability

Sustainability is a necessity for all pedestrian based trails in Ontario and Hike Ontario as an advocate for these, needs to have sustainability itself.

Our goals include: Secure sustainable funding sources; Develop and implement a comprehensive fundraising strategy; Expand our volunteer contingent and; strive towards reintroduction of paid staff.

Currently under development, COMPASS 2015 will be:

- Hike Ontario's Strategic Plan
- An update to Compass 2010
- A shared commitment to our vision
- In sync with current trends in Ontario such as the Ontario Trails Strategy
- Our blueprint for action

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As Hike Ontario president, I inherited a number of dynamic programs and services that had been put in place by my predecessor, Terri LeRoux and others. I have undertaken to oversee the dissemination and continued development of these efforts and you will find reports on them in the following pages.

I have tried to support and facilitate Henry Graupner's efforts to both make the office into a fully functioning and pleasant environment to work in that is well organized as well as his efforts to step back and pass the torch to other volunteers. I believe we have been successful in creating an environment that will allow a staff person to work effectively. From the office we can now accept and respond to mail, phone calls, e-mails and personal visits. We can create and print documents, hike leader and safe hiker certificates, discs on CD and posters. Records have been organized and are backed up regularly and cheque records are kept for the use of the Treasurer. This is an achievement that Henry Graupner and our office volunteers, Erica Kitteringham and Ian Holmes can be proud of. I believe it also allows us to hire a staff person and create a protocol for remunerating tasks which earn Hike Ontario fees for service.

I have supported the efforts of the Compass 2015 committee to engage our clubs in assessment of the services we provide, examine our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats and plan goals for the next 5 years. We need to recognize the leadership that Ron Hunt has provided and the efforts of all of the committee members.

We have taken steps towards the employment of paid staff by implementing the Grant Policy and recruiting a Fund Raising chair as well as creating a Job Description for such as person and moving towards creating a Business Plan to assess the means of supporting this position financially.

I have attempted to liaison with staff in Educational facilities such as schools and at the board level, commercial interests such as M.E.C., Parks and Recreation departments in Municipalities, Conservation Area staff, Provincial Park authorities and provincial politicians. These have been efforts to promote our programs and achieve our vision of being the province's most valuable support resource for hiking and walking groups and pedestrian trail users.

Finally I am delighted that we have a complete executive that is competent, reflective of our province's diversity and enthusiastic. I will continue to serve Hike Ontario as Past President on the board and through delivering programs in training Hike Leaders and Safe Hikers.

Insurance Report

Currently Hike Ontario offers liability Insurance for our clubs that provides \$5 million dollars coverage with a \$1000 deductible. This program is seen as revenue neutral as

the value of the premiums we charge almost exactly matches what we paid to the insurer (Intact of Canada). Seven Hiking Clubs and twelve Trail Associations participate currently. Hike Ontario events and training courses are also covered by this insurance. We were delighted that we were able to maintain the rates charged last year despite sustaining a premium increase per trail participating. Hike Ontario lowered some of our coverage in order to do this.

Next year the insurance will be tendered in order to get competitive rates.

Our broker, Warren Pitton of Insurance Central in Dundas is responsive and dedicated to making insurance work to keep trails affordable. This year we have been focussing on Risk Management as a part of maintaining safe, sustainable trails. This will be reported on by Bill Wilson who has led this effort.

Ambassador Program

We have supplied Ambassador discs to our reps and others who have requested them. We can create further discs in our office and I thank Wendy Hoernig for her part in keeping this program dynamic.

I have presented our materials and programs to Parks and Recreation departments, Conservation and Provincial Park staff as well as provincial politicians.

Best Practices for Encouraging Trail Usage by Hikers and Walkers

We have provided this valuable document to various groups who care for trails.

Fleming College has bought copies for their students as a part of course work. We plan to continue to distribute the information to Parks and Recreation staff in cities, Conservation Areas and Provincial Parks.

Ontario Hiking Week

Many of our trails provided the listing of their hikes for posting on our website prior to and during Ontario Hiking Week October 1st – 7th. We provided a press release to clubs and media and a message about Ontario Hiking Week appeared on the website.

Volunteer of the Year Award

Three awards will be presented at the Annual Summit as follows:

Long Distance Hiking Awards

We have given out a few of these Awards but need to find a way to promote the program more effectively.

Young Hiker Program

This document was proofread by Wendy Hoernig and edited by Terri LeRoux. The three books we first produced were combined to form one book. We have put the document into the hands of reps, school teachers, parks and recreation department staff, provincial park and conservation staff.

One school board has signed a contract with Hike Ontario to provide workshops to their staff who will each receive a manual as part of their participation. Funds from a chapter of TD Friends of the Environment have been applied for to help fund this partnership but the first 25 manuals will be sold regardless of the success of this application. This may be a model we can use to spread the program across the province.

Safe Hikers Program

We have trained more than 40 Safe Hiker instructors over the past year. The challenge is to now offer these trainings to participants across the province. We are engaging in providing this program to Hike Nova Scotia under a fee for service.

Annual Summit

We are pleased to hold our Annual Summit “Our Right to Roam” at Sir Sandford Fleming College from November 12 – 14. Students, Oxfam Trail walkers and board members were welcome to attend for no charge (provided they registered before November 1st). The topics span the range of concerns and interests which pedestrian trail associations and hiking clubs are engaged in and will be a celebration of “Our Right to Roam”

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Certification Report

Submitted by David Francis

Safe Hiker

The Safe Hiker program has now trained 28 instructors in 2010, but the level of courses is still very poor. I would say this program still needs to find its right niche in the market place. The correct positioning of the program is vital for its success and we still need to have that discussion.

Certified Hike Leader

Demand remains steady for this program with 11 courses and 168 new hike leaders trained this year so far, and still another five courses for the remainder of 2010.

Instructors Database

We have been working with Henry to put in place an Instructor database that will track the instructors who are currently registered for each particular year. To be registered, an instructor must send in their annual registration fee of \$25 prior to teaching a course. This applies to both Safe Hike and Hike Leader instructors.

We will also discuss tracking the instructor fund component of \$25 per student. At the present time this is lumped in with the overall fee, but we need to track whether the \$25 fee is sufficient to cover the cost of instructors' honorarium, travel and accommodation expenses.

Wilderness Day and Wilderness Trip Courses

We have an increasing demand for these courses, but at the present time non are scheduled to run. At the present time, I am the only trained instructor for these courses, and have been dealing with health issues this year.

Hike Nova Scotia, Hike Barbados

Hike Ontario has been so successful with its certification programs that we have been asked by other provincial and national hiking organizations to help them set up their own certification programs.

Hike Nova Scotia has received our license agreement and they are hoping to expedite this later this year or early 2011. However, like us, they are a volunteer organization which can only move ahead depending on the energy level and time of its volunteers. They are also trying to raise funds to pay HO for the license fee and other program costs.

Public Policy, Advocacy & Government Relations

Submitted by Bill Wilson

NATURE DEFICIT AND THE INCREASING NEED FOR OUR TRAILS

Following the last HO Summit, I obtained an electronic copy of Terri LeRoux's PowerPoint presentation on Nature Deficit Disorder entitled "**WHERE HAVE ALL THE CHILDREN GONE- An update on Nature Deficit Disorder**" to show to interested parties. So far I have been asked to write a 2-part article on the NDD DVD for Caledon Green Tea's newsletter and have also sent it to the Caledon Environmental Advisory Committee. I also presented the DVD to Caledon's Green Tea regular meeting and to the Toronto Region Conservation Authority staff and Report Card Committee as part of the case for continuing outdoor education as a **KEY INDICATOR** of the new **TRCA GTA Wide Report Card on the Health of the Natural Environment**.

DRAFTING OF NEW HO RISK MANAGEMENT DOCUMENT

The purpose of the new document is to define and describe the key elements of risk mgt which HO clubs need to be aware of in order for them to review/design their own risk mgt program/plan. It is not to be prescriptive but lay out existing standards and guides. In preparation for this task I attended the meeting with Warren Pitton of Insurance Central Ltd in Dundas on Jan 11th. Don Richards and Richard Boehnke of the BTC assisted me with several drafts.

We sent a draft of the new HO Risk Mgt document entitled: "**THE KEY ELEMENTS OF RISK MANAGEMENT FOR ONTARIO HIKING CLUBS AND ASSOCIATIONS**" for circulation to the Board for review and comment by the Sept 25th Board meeting. HO Insurer agent Warren Pitton contributed to this draft. The four of us believe we have produced a concise description of the due diligence under 10 distinct headings which our clubs should exercise within their capabilities without being too prescriptive. This new RM document does not change any of the ground rules for our clubs. The purpose of this RM update is to clearly outline to our clubs what is involved in a RM Plan. Comments are still being looked at and new draft will be produced soon.

The group insurance policy which HO now provides may be jeopardized if our individual club RM practices are not sufficient to answer a law suit. Therefore, after discussion with the HO Board about any amendments to this document over the next few months, I believe a reasonable question to ask all Board members would be: "**Can your club give us all your assurance that you will adhere to these 10 key elements to the best of your capability within a reasonable time?**"

GTA WEST CORRIDOR EA

The GTA West highway corridor runs from Highway 400 to Guelph. The EA may result in impact of new transport facilities to the Oakridges, Elora Cataract, Bruce Trail, Guelph and Humber Valley trails. MTO and its consultants do not yet refer to eventual specific outcomes of the EA but there is a high likelihood that another 400 level

highway (generally known as 413) is in the making in a few years. Corridor maps dated March 2010 from the Consultant Consortium (GTA WEST) can be seen at: <http://www.gta-west.com/pdf/4-9-10/GTAW%20-%20Area%20Transportation%20System%20Alternatives%20Report%20-%20Main%20Report%20and%20Appendices.pdf>

On Feb 26/10, the Consultant replied to the BTC regarding potential highway impact: “Information gathered on existing environmental conditions, including the presence and significance of the Bruce Trail will be used in Stage 2 of the EA (after this study is completed) to generate and evaluate design alternatives for the Recommended Transportation Development Strategy. At that stage the Project Team will consider all significant and sensitive features (including the Bruce Trail) in greater detail and will develop design alternatives that minimize impacts to the most sensitive areas. The ability of each design alternative to avoid or minimize impact to the Bruce Trail will be given fair consideration at a greater level of detail. If the Transportation Development Strategy includes an alternative that cannot avoid impacts to the Bruce Trail, then mitigation measures will be identified.”

I continue to connect with Todd Bardes of BTC about our HO strategy with consultant.

HO CLUB ACCESSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

On March 31, 2010, I discussed several findings about the **ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES (AOD) ACT 2005** with HO Board members

While it is evident that no requirements will be regulated in the near future for HO clubs with no employees, it would be advisable, from a public relations point of view, for those clubs to familiarize themselves with compatible organizational behaviour while communicating with persons with disabilities. (See website shown above). It is possible that a future standard under the Act dealing with the “Built Environment” could affect how trails are built by HO clubs. Compliance questions can be emailed to the Ministry at accessibility@css.gov.on.ca or phoned at 1-866-515-2025.

TORONTO REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY TRAIL STANDARDS REVIEW

On July 15, I participated in a half day TRCA staff discussion of planned changes to the TRCA’s Trail Standards manual. I emphasized the continued importance of pedestrian – only trails in view of rapid urbanization and cuts in formal outdoor education funding.

COLD CREEK GUIDE AND DVD

I co-authored a 56–page trail guide for the Cold Creek Conservation Area and produced a 17–minute DVD promoting the Cold Creek Stewardship as a way of advancing outdoor education values of the Cold Creek Area and its 6.5 Kilometre trail.

TRAIL MAINTENANCE COST CALCULATIONS

On May 15th I asked Board Members to help me calculate an average dollar cost per kilometre for their club's trail maintenance. Several clubs volunteered to help. So far, I have heard from only 3 clubs- HVHTA, TVTA and BTC

By demonstrating actual average annual club trail maintenance costs on a Province - wide basis in contributing to the enjoyment and health of the public FREE of tax payer costs, I believe we could better support our future grant applications and we could better support our argument to the Province to reduce our cost burden for insurance.

Club trail maintenance costs I see as a combination of annual person work hours cost plus materials cost. Annual person work hours spent are multiplied by a \$20/hour minimum wage dollar amount. Person hours can include trail repair work time, audit time, hike leading time, planning time for any work. This annual person work hours dollar figure would then be added to the actual annual dollar amount spent on materials and equipment. This total cost is then converted into dollar costs per kilometre (of YOUR trail kilometreage) for a total club average annual per kilometre expense. **If 3300 km can be used as an HO club total trail kilometreage, and an average annual club cost per kilometre of \$150 is reasonable, an amount of \$500,000 of expenditures can be documented as a collective annual HO public service.**

More club help would be desirable to produce a credible overall average figure!

SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ontario Trails Council Report

Submitted by Terri LeRoux

Hike Ontario represents the interests of hikers and walkers on the Ontario Trails Council (OTC) Board of Directors.

The Ontario Trails Council (OTC) was formally established in 1988 as an alliance of trail user groups such as hikers, cyclists, snowmobilers and equestrians--all who share a common interest in trails and the conversion of abandoned rail lines for use as trails. The OTC was incorporated as a corporation without capital share in 1991 and registered as a charity in 1992. Since its inception, the OTC has grown and its membership includes trail management organizations such as municipalities, conservation authorities and citizen groups.

The OTC is the only organization in Ontario to represent all types of trail users: snowmobilers and ATVers, skiers and dog sledgers, equestrians and cyclists, hikers and bird watchers, etc. The OTC membership is comprised of:

- provincial trail user organizations/ associations such as the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs, Ontario Equestrian Federation and Hike Ontario
- private individuals
- trail management groups such as the Huronia Trails and Park 2 Park, conservation authorities and community associations such as Rainbow Routes (in the Sudbury area), and the Bruce-Grey Trail Network, as well as municipalities such as Ottawa, Sarnia and North Bay.
- industry-supported organizations such as the Aggregate Producers Association

The Ontario government cannot be a member, but several ministries have different levels of interest in the OTC and its activities and have provided financial support for specific initiatives. The OTC directors are volunteers and are elected to two-year terms at the annual general meeting.

OTC Goals:

- Continue to increase the number, length, variety and accessibility of trails throughout the province
- Provide government and other public bodies with an informed, credible voice in support of trail interest groups
- Promote the safe and responsible use of trails
- Act as a provincial resource centre for trail information
- Encourage the establishment of the Trillium Trail Network

The Annual OTC AGM and conference, Trailhead Ontario, was held in Toronto in June. At this time, Frieda Baldwin (HO Rep for Huronia Trails & Greenways) was elected to the OTC board.

For more info please visit www.ontariotrails.on.ca

Hike Canada En Marche

Submitted by David Francis

Hike Canada the national trail system dedicated to hiking, snowshoeing and backpacking. Well-trodden or rugged, there are 3800km of operable trail with many more tracts of public lands awaiting designation. Once established coast to coast, the trail corridor will offer a contrasting array of heritage of natural landscapes and historic places, and provide passage, habitat, and refuge for wildlife.

History

From a 1971 meeting of national outdoor organizations and with the slogan "Towards a Foot Trail across Canada", the National Hiking Trail was launched officially at a ceremony in Ottawa in 1987. Piece by piece, the scenic 10,000 kilometre footpath is growing between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and our long-held vision of a natural corridor connecting existing natural-surface pedestrian trail systems with parklands and wild places is becoming a reality.

The Objectives are:

"To establish and maintain a National Hiking Trail system linking Canada's provinces from coast to coast."

Linking Canada's Heritage through walking. In establishing a foot trail across Canada, we bring a broad spectrum of benefits to Canadians through:

- assisting in preservation of our heritage of natural and historic places.
- encouraging fitness and healthy outdoor exercise through hiking and walking-related recreational activities. working with other health promoting organizations to encourage walking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.
- promoting environmental awareness of our natural surroundings and appreciation for wildlife protection.
- advancing the National Hiking Trail as a national icon to schools, tourism agencies and information media.
- providing tourism opportunities to attract Canadians and international visitors and benefit regional and local economies.
- encouraging the growth of regional and local hiking trails as part of the national hiking trail system.
- strengthening national ties by physical linkage of hiking trail systems and cooperation among supporters of the National Hiking Trail.

Committee Reports

To carry out the work of Hike Ontario, various standing and sub-committees have been established. Our committees are comprised entirely of volunteers that work tireless hours to help Hike Ontario achieve our mandate. Volunteers are always welcome on any committee.

Certification and Awards

Submitted by David Francis

The Youth Hike Leader course has been abandoned in favour of the Safe Hike Certification.

The Standard Hike Leader has been renamed the Certified Hike Leader.

Seven courses have been completed for 2009 resulting in 122 new Certified Hike Leaders. One more course is scheduled for November.

1. February 21,- Thames Valley Club, London – Instructor Tom Friesen
2. April 18 – Bruce Trail, Caledon – Instructor David Francis
3. May 23 – ORTA – Instructors Harold Sellers and Diana Smyth
4. July 28 – Bayfield River Valley – Instructor Wendy Hoernig
5. October 15 & 16 – Flemming College, Lindsay – Instructor David Francis
6. October 24 – ORTA – Instructor Diana Smyth
7. October 25 – MEC

In the fifteen years since the HL program has been in place we now certified over 1,000 hike leaders. The committee maintains contact via email and bi-monthly meetings, with one social event per year.

The Policy Manual has been updated and keeps a standard of methods procedures.

Wendy Hoernig did extensive work updating the Certified Hike Leader manual. We are still working on the designs for the new long distance awards.

The two new awards are for 3000 km and 5000 km for total distance hiked. It was agreed to have a design theme of a White Oak for the 3000 km and Sugar Maple for the 5000 km awards. Howard is going to work on these designs and circulate for input.

Communications

Submitted by Terri LeRoux and John Fortier

Ontario Hiking Week – October 1 –7: The theme for this year was Hiking and Walking for Healthy Communities. The concept is to foster awareness and interaction between hiking clubs and their communities. Clubs were asked to promote Ontario Hiking Week events using posters displayed at community businesses and municipal buildings and run a hiking or walking event.

A poster was placed on the Ontario Hiking Week web page for download by Clubs. By Friday, September 25th 22 events had been posted on the web page.

An information package including a press release was sent to media outlets including CBC Radio – Ontario and Toronto Morning, CTV, A Channels – Barrie and London, Star Travel Editor, Globe Travel Editor, Owen Sound Sun, Port Elgin Shoreline Beacon, Ontario Tourism – Jack Lynch, The Communications Committee is in need of many volunteers to increase Hike Ontario’s profile with the general public and trail organizations.

The responsibilities of the Communications Committee include:

- management and maintenance of the Hike Ontario website www.hikeontario.com
- management and maintenance of the Board Only Section of the website
- design and preparation of the Annual Report for distribution at Annual General Meeting held each November
- creating and implementing a marketing plan for Ontario Hiking Week, October 1–7 annually
- Managing social marketing accounts on Twitter and Facebook
- Providing Committee & Program Support by designing all marketing materials for Hike Ontario programs and services
- creating power point presentations and supporting materials as required for the Ambassador Program
- preparing and distributing Ambassador Program materials (cd’s) to our Ambassadors
- Creating, managing and distributing a Hike Ontario newsletter (electronic)
- Providing HO member clubs with articles and content for their local newsletters

Fund Development

Submitted by Terri LeRoux

In 2009, the Fund Development Committee drafted a Grant Policy for Hike Ontario that will assist the board in seeking and managing grants in support of our valuable programs and services.

Volunteers are vitally needed to help carry out the fundraising initiative of the Fund Development Committee.

Responsibilities of the committee include:

- developing and implementing a comprehensive fundraising plan that will ensure the sustainability of Hike Ontario
- Managing the Friends of Hike Ontario Program including: preparing direct mail solicitation letters to garner individual support; providing Friends with frequent updates on HO activities and; seeking and creating opportunities to increase annual giving and individual donations to Hike Ontario
- Managing grant applications including: ensuring board and committee adherence to the Hike Ontario Grant Policy and; researching opportunities and applying for grants to support HO programs and services
- Seeking opportunities for partnerships and collaborations with corporations and the business sector
- Managing our Donor Recognition Program and ensuring that all supporters are adequately recognized
- Providing a list of current (fiscal year) donors for inclusion in Hike Ontario's Annual Report

Safe Hikers Program

Submitted by Deanna Rando

There has been some significant progress with the Safe Hiker Program this year. One official course was offered this year on April 18th to a group of 28 Scouts/ Girl Guides leaders. The course was hosted by the Grand Valley Trails Association and the Grand River Conservation Authority. The course generated much interest within the guiding/scouting community– an avenue for our courses that Hike Ontario may wish to pursue in the future.

Another Safe Hiker Program is scheduled for October 24th for a small group of staff from Mountain Equipment Co-op (Burlington). It will be held at the Whole Village ecovillage in Caledon.

Additionally, a first batch of instructors have been trained up to deliver the program. On October 17th, the first Safe Hiker Instructor program was delivered to 15 candidates representing over 10 different hiking clubs including a representative from Hike Nova Scotia. All candidates passed (either fully or conditionally) and it is now hoped that the Safe Hiker program can be launched in communities across Ontario.

Risk Management & Insurance

Submitted by John Fortier

In 2009, two major changes occurred with the program. The first was the retirement of Harold Sellers who so capably managed the Hike Ontario insurance program. The second was the decision by the Hike Ontario Board of Directors to combine Insurance with Risk Management under a single portfolio. This has resulted in the duties of 2 portfolios being handled by a single volunteer Board member.

Club Insurance Assessment

The cost of Commercial General Liability insurance for 2009 has remained at the previous year's level. Total insurance cost for 2009 was \$40,400.10. Each Club was assessed according to the Hike Ontario Insurance Manual based on number of members and length of trail. A copy of the assessment formula from the Hike Ontario Insurance Manual was included with the September Board minutes.

Insurance

Certificates of Insurance (COI): 8 COI's were issued for additional insured for 6 clubs.

3 issued to fulfill funding requirements for National Trails Coalition grants

Remaining COI's

- Batawa Sports to cover trail use during the period of the 2009 Summit, Nov 13 through 15
- Ontario Realty Corporation to satisfy a Freedom of Information request regarding a trail Right of Way
- Upper Thames River Conservation Authority for trail access on their property
- Elliot Lake Trails Alliance to fulfill funding requirements for National Trails Coalition grants
- Toronto Libraries – S.Walter Stewart Library – East York Club AGM.

Hike Leader and Instructor Coverage

Interest in our courses is growing resulting in an increasing number of certified hike leaders. There have been some questions to the extent of Hike Ontario insurance coverage under its current General Commercial Liability policy. The existing practice still stands. Insurance coverage is extended to Club and Hike Ontario volunteers, employees and contractors participating in Club or Hike Ontario executive sanctioned events or activities.

Imagine Canada – Risk Management Webinars

A series of webinar series on risk management was attended. These Webinars have been archived for future reference and training. <http://>

Incident Reports

Lighting Strike – Thames Valley Trail Association (TVTA): 2 TVTA members were involved during a hike on a rail trail in the Hyde Park area. Although both were knocked to the ground, only minor injuries were sustained. The strike seems to be from a storm that moved in faster than predicted. A review with our insurance adjuster showed that proper procedures were followed prior to and after the strike.

Giant Hogweed

This plant has been reported adjacent to the Thames Valley Trail north of London, Uthoff Trail in the Ganaraska System and on the Oak Ridges Trail. It has the capability of causing severe burns when combined with exposure to sunlight which will recur due solely to subsequent sunlight exposures.

Note: Hike Ontario training covers both of these hazards.

Young Hikers Program

Submitted by Terri LeRoux

In 2008 –2009, Hike Ontario began piloting one of our newest programs and resource, the Young Hikers Program.

Hike Ontario knows that to protect, preserve and increase the number of hiking trails in Ontario, we need citizens who care for them and are able to effect positive change. By providing the resources and tools that will help foster a love for hiking, walking and trails, our Young Hikers Program is cultivating the hike leaders of tomorrow, today.

The Young Hikers Program is multi-modal and will introduce youth (under the age of 29) to the joys and benefits of hiking, through a variety of mediums such as:

- Young Hikers Program Lessons and Activity Booklets for educators & youth workers
- Safe Hiking Program
- Youth volunteer opportunities
- Contests & Games
- Social Networking Opportunities (facebook groups)

Piloted this year were a series of three Activity Resource Booklets that are designed to be used right in Ontario's classrooms. Designed to align with the Ontario school curriculum, each lesson is prepared in a consistent, easy to use format that contains:

- Grade Level
- Provincial Curriculum Link
- Subject
- Strand
- Keywords
- Specific Lesson Goals
- Lesson Description
- Preparation
- Resources Required
- Procedure
- Enrichment / Extension Activities
- Educator Notes

During our pilot program, a number of schools introduced the three booklets to their students

- Hike Ontario, Young Hikers Activity Resource Booklet, Grade K-5
- Hike Ontario, Young Hikers Activity Resource Booklet, Grade 6-8
- Hike Ontario, Young Hikers Activity Resource Booklet, Grade 9-12

Feedback was incredibly positive but did identify the need to condense the books from 3 booklets to two. To be completed before the end of 2009, these three books will be replaced with the following two booklets:

- Hike Ontario, Young Hikers Activity Resource Booklet, Grade K-8
- Hike Ontario, Young Hikers Activity Resource Booklet, Grade 9-12

Focus in 2010 will then be on securing the funds to publish the resources and provide copies to as many of Ontario's schools as possible. Ideally, Hike Ontario would also like to secure funds to hire a YHP Program Coordinator.

For more info visit www.hikeontario.com/yhp

HIKE ONTARIO MEMBER CLUB REPORTS

Hike Ontario's member clubs and associations fall into three categories:

Hiking Clubs: are predominantly urban and offer organized events and excursions to member trails, rail trails, Conservation Authority, Ontario Parks or municipal trails. Membership varies but can be quite large.

Trail Building Clubs: are associations who build and maintain recreational hiking trails in various parts of the province. They provide the full range of trail management services, including trail development, maps and guidebooks, maintenance, landowner relations, events, membership and newsletters, as well as promotion and publicity for their particular trails. There are approximately 3500 km of such trails in the province

Affiliate Members: are corporations, government agencies and organizations other than non-profit hiking or trail building organizations (commercial or non-profit) that support our mission, vision and values.

4 Day Walk

In 1909, the term Vierdaagse (Four Days) was first introduced in The Netherlands. The Royal Dutch Association for Physical Education (KNBLO) held 'walking marches' during this time.

The first [Avond-vierdaagse](#) (Evening Four Days) event was held in 1941 and quickly gained a following throughout The Netherlands. When the German occupying forces found out about this new form of walks they were forbidden to hold them because they were seen as a form of resistance against the occupiers.

After the Second World War, the [Avond-Vierdaagse](#) was held in various towns. Local walkers associations adopted it and the walks were held all over The Netherlands. Currently, the Avond-Vierdaagse is held in almost every part of The Netherlands and worldwide. There are also other larger events like the Nijmeegse Vierdaagse. Over the years there have been other forms of the Vierdaagse introduced: The swimming and cycling variants are the most common.

The Hamilton Four Day Evening Walk has taken place at the Royal Botanical Gardens since 1991 and is celebrating the 20th annual walk this year.

As promised a report on our 4 day walk held in the Royal Botanical Gardens Aboretum June 14, 15,16,17.

We had 4 fantastic days of weather except for Thursday when it rained in the afternoon making the trails slick.

No rain however during the event.

We had 380 participants which was up from 300 the year before.

We had no mishaps and we had a lot of fun and food after each walk.

This walk is taken from the annual 4 day walk in the Netherlands and this was our 20th.

Please check our website at www.4dew.com for pictures and history

Algoma Highlands Conservancy

The mission of the AHC is to conserve and protect the unique beauty and ecological integrity of key areas within the Algoma Highlands region. Our collective achievements reflect the dedication and passion of our Board volunteers, our staff and many other individuals, agencies and partners who provide grass-roots support.

On November 30, 2009 the AHC became the official proud owners of the 2600 ac (1050 ha) we refer to as the King Mountain property! As such a unique and dominant landform of the Algoma Highlands we are absolutely ecstatic that our years of hard work and the support of so many friends have finally come to fruition! The realization of this objective ensures that the total 1215 ha (3000 acres) of property can be maintained and managed as a conservation forest for many generations to enjoy.

Our recent accomplishments don't end there! Thanks to a \$15,000 Access and Activity grant from Mountain Equipment Co-op, and the support of our partners from the Soo Cycling Club, the construction of a 14.5 km single track mountain bike trail loop is now complete! This loop, combined with existing double track trails, will result in a high quality and exciting mountain bike trail system that meanders through the AHC's property for the benefit and enjoyment of the general public.

This fall, AHC staff have worked hard inventorying a representative sub-sample the entire property. This includes a rigorous timber cruise for our Baseline Documentation Reporting. We are also collecting vegetation information, as well as recording observations of significant natural features and Species at Risk.

For the first time ever, the AHC has officially set up a formal membership program through which we hope to solidify our deep bonds with the local and regional community, as well as harness a more secure and sustainable basis from which we can operate. We anticipate that this will be a useful fundraiser, but more importantly, we hope this encourages many of you to become more involved in our mission. We need your ideas. We need your enthusiasm. We need you to look at this land as something you contribute to!

Avon Trail

Submitted by Karen LeFrancois- Hill

The Avon Trail Association is finishing off it's 35th year of operation with the completion of an End to End hike. There will be 35 hikers receiving their Badge in summation of 9 hikes spread out over the course of the year. Our membership is up slightly with an active group working on hiking and trail maintenance. Calls regarding potential sightings of the Giant Hogweed were dealt with the Weed Inspectors and our Board. Two bridges were built this year with another one due for completion by year end. The Thames Valley Trail Association is to be commended for their assistance in providing us with one bridge, in training our trail maintenance crew on bridge building and on trail maintenance. Trail re routes have been handled and the Trail has been audited and GPS'd. Our thanks go to Jamie Hember for providing us this service. Our small Board has kept up networking with other like minded groups across our three Counties. We have offered 78 hikes this year including hikes on regular hikes on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturdays.

Bayfield River Valley Trail

Submitted by Ken Magee

The Association has had an active year so far in 2010. The local Municipality of Bluewater gave us permission to develop a new 4 km trail and to re-develop an unused older 2 km trail on municipal land. These trails have exceeded our expectations in beauty. There is still much to do in developing them. Recently we reconstructed a bridge to fit the trail mower. The entrance to one of the trails has been rerouted with a new culvert installed and work is progressing on designing an 18+ m bridge to span a creek on the longer trail. As of now, the trails are ready for winter and cross-country skiing and/or snowshoeing.

Since these two trails fall under Municipal insurance we hope to create some multi-use features that will allow cross-country biking. Someday we hope the shorter trail can be adapted for wheelchairs and multi-passenger golf carts for the disabled and elderly.

We have our own donated lawnmowers for trail maintenance on both noted trails. They are locked and hidden near the meadows. We have had a donation of service from a local landscape contractor to regularly cut the meadow trail (hence the enlarged bridge noted above).

By anecdotal evidence and wear on the paths, trail use on our established trails is high and growing. Several members are now certified hike leaders. Local groups have requested that we lead hikes which help spread the word about the trails. We have established a program committee to encourage more organized activities on our trails.

A committee of the Trail Association has been formed to establish a project to start to deal with the dying older trees in our village, and our urban reforestation campaign.

We continue to enjoy good support from all of our landowner partners and some have even joined our trail development and maintenance team. We will soon be starting our 2001 membership renewal campaign.

We appreciate the support that we receive from Hike Ontario.

Bighead River Heritage Association (Trout Hollow Trail)

Submitted by Ron Knight

We now have about 45 members, many who hike our trail and keep it clean and groomed. The trail is a walking trail and is kept as much as possible, as a natural trail with hiker safety in mind. ATV and bike traffic is always a problem on some parts of the trail but we have managed to keep it to a minimum so far. The trail seems to be well used with many families from town out with their children and many visitors from elsewhere encountered on the trail. Trail maintenance is always required since the river is constantly changing course and day campers leave a lot of garbage in spots. We find the fisherpersons carry out a lot of the junk as part of being able to fish in the river. This is a nice benefit for the club. We replaced one of our bridges this year and plan a substantial re-route around a marshy area next year. Our trail map and membership forms are on display in several local tourist centres and in the provincial centre in Barrie. Without our volunteers and landowners, we would not be able to provide the experience. We thank them for that.

Bruce Trail Conservancy

Submitted by Ron Scanlon

2009–2010 Annual Report Highlights

- Fundraising: in 2009–2010 total donations, grants and sponsorships came to \$3.98 million
- Over the past year, the BTC procured 927 acres and secured 10 properties valued at over \$2.4 million. This included over \$330,000 in land donated by generous landowners and over \$870,000 from donors
- 7.6 km of new optimum route was secured
- 149 volunteer land stewards now manage 203 BTC properties on 7,200 acres
- Stewardship plans are completed or underway for all BTC properties
- 32 reroutes were made in 2009–2010 including newly blazed trail and closures on both the main and side trails
- A tunnel under Highway 6 opened in Iroquoia (between Hamilton and Burlington)
- The main Bruce Trail is now 890 km in length; this compares with 694 km in 1970
- The BTC maintains a total of about 1300 km of trail including over 400 km of side trails
- BTC has more than 1100 volunteers representing a labour value of over \$2 million annually

- 8865 memberships were active at the end of the year; that is up 4.7% from last year
- The BTC has 1845 new members while 1447 existing members did not renew; a membership is counted “per family”
- BTC corporate sponsorship programs are strong including Ontario Power Generation; Keen Canada; Bullfrog Power; Trek Escapes and Angel’s Gate Winery
- BTC members remain a key outreach link to the community
- Each of the nine clubs organizes a whole slate of regular hikes throughout the year
- The 26th edition of BTC trail guide is now available.

Durham Outdoors Club

Submitted by Diane Crooks

- Km's of trail: **0**
- # of members : **141 members as of September 2010.**
This is down a bit from our membership number of the previous year. We expect to have some additional members before our year-end of March 2011.
- # of current board members and current vacancies: **SEVEN ON EXECUTIVE, NO VACANCIES.**
(Note: there are also FIVE ‘Event Coordinators’)
- Total # of volunteers and estimated annual volunteer hours: **Not applicable*.**
*unless including Executive and Coordinator duties, eg.
 - preparing for and attending 10 evening meetings plus 3–4 Newsletter meetings
 - maintaining membership files and financial records
 - updating the Web site
 - preparing and distributing the quarterly Newsletter, and
 - the actual organization of leading hikes, bike trips or social activities.
- # of guided hikes or organized activities held: **many.**

Similar to last year’s report, our group is not a dedicated hiking group. This past year we have seen an increased interest in biking (every Tuesday night in summer) and some rail-trail weekend rides. Wednesday night ‘nosy neighbour’ walks give members a chance to keep in touch from May to August. Members also attended the Millbrook 4th Line outdoor theatre and folk festivals (eg. Mariposa)., YMCA Camp Wanakita, and enjoyed canoe trips (day, weekend and week-long).

- Special projects or Major events: We recognize that we do not maintain any trails, so individual members make contributions eg. to Orono Crown Lands Trust.
- Major issues facing your club: **Concern about information from Hike Ontario regarding risk management, liability, insurance. Could mean fewer individuals**

interested in taking on positions of responsibility (and future change to a more informal group structure).

- How Hike Ontario can assist your club. **Continue with Insurance coverage for now, thank you.**

Elgin Hiking Trail Club

Submitted by Naomi Armstrong

It's been a busy fall on the Elgin Hiking Trail. A leisurely end-to-end started on October 9, in partnership with the Avon Trail Club.

On our second hike, October 23, we stopped at Sunset Café to celebrate the 35th anniversary of both clubs.

A total of 28 hikers enjoyed a piece of cake at the spot where the Elgin trail began 35 years ago. At that time the trail went six Kilometres south to John Wise Line. Now the trail runs 41 Km from Port Stanley north to Southdel Line where it connects with the Thames Valley Trail. The original club had about 20 members, today there are 150 members.

The trail owes its origins to the ideas proposed by Brian Henson, now of Brantford. The picturesque Elgin Trail which runs along the Kettle Creek Valley to St. Thomas, and then along the Dodd Creek tributary to Payne's Mills is a challenging hike. It also goes one Km through a horse farm northwest of St. Thomas.

On October 15, 60 senior public school students walked to the sand dunes overlooking the Kettle Creek spillway valley south of St. Thomas.

Our annual Candlelit Christmas Spirit Walk is scheduled for Saturday, December 4 at Springwater, in partnership with the Catfish Conservation Authority.

Last year we had 800 people take the tour. Volunteers from the club work the gate, lead the tours, and serve hot chocolate and cookies.

Some of the volunteer performers have been there for the 12 years of the event.

This busy season is in contrast to the heat of the summer when very few activities are held.

We will be having a Christmas party for the first time in several years, Thursday, December 8, at Sunset Café.

This will be followed by an optional walk through the Fantasy of Lights in nearby Pinafore Park, St. Thomas.

Elora Cataract Trailway Association

Submitted by Raymond Soucy

The Elora Cataract Trailway is a 47-km (29-mile) trail that links parks, watersheds and Communities in south-central Ontario. The trail is routed along the abandoned railway corridor

of the 1879 Credit Valley Railway and runs from Elora to Cataract, passing through the Communities of Elora, Fergus, Belwood, Orton, Hillsburgh, Erin and Cataract.

The Elora Cataract Trailway Association (ECTA) focuses on Promoting, Enhancing and Protecting the Elora Cataract Trailway.

This year “Hike the Trail” went from a single fall hike to a series of monthly hikes starting in May and ending in December. These hikes are held with the support of “in motion” and the township of Centre Wellington. The route took walkers not only on the Elora Cataract Trailway but also highlighted several adjacent trails. One of the highpoints of the season was our July evening hike entitled “Flight of the Fireflies”. Our Oct 3rd hike, “Cornstalks and Goblins”, was timed to take advance of “Ontario Hiking Week”.

As part of the 5 year Trailway improvement plan, the ECTA planted 330 container grown (3’–6’) trees along the Trailway. The ECTA would like to thank the Green Legacy Nursery for their support with this project. The renovation of the Gerrie Road (Elora) trailhead continued with good progress made in beautifying the entrance. A commemorative bench is also slated to be installed as part of the improvements.

Project B.O.O.T. (Benches on our Trailway) launched in 2009 in conjunction with the Belwood, Elora, Fergus, Marsville, Hillsburgh, and Erin LIONS clubs. Project B.O.O.T is geared to installing commemorative benches along the Trailway. Anyone can purchase a commemorative bench for \$450 from the above mentioned LIONS clubs. The purchase price includes the bench along with the installation and future maintenance. Currently there have been 5 benches installed by the LIONS clubs. Another 5 benches are slated for installation in 2010. See www.trailway.org for more details.

The 2010 AGM was held on Sunday March 28th at the Elora Centre for the Arts. Our Guest speaker this year was Andy Goldie – “Director of Parks and Recreation for the Township of Centre Wellington” Andy had a very interesting presentation on the development on the TCW official plan and potential for new trails. It was followed by a lively Q&A.

Friends of the Trail

Submitted by Bill Gray

Email: friendsofthetrail@yahoo.com

Website: www.friendsofthetrail.ca

Once again we have been busy! We began to realize just how busy when we totaled up the value of our activities for the past 2 years, and realized we had raised funds and contributed labour to the tune of \$180,000. This amount of production is significant for a community based Not-For-Profit trail developer, and could not have been accomplished without the energetic teamwork of our devoted volunteers. So what have we done?

NTC Project (Locks road to Bernard Long): The upgrade to the southern section of the Trail has been completed and from the numerous calls and comments received it is a huge success. It has provided a safe and enjoyable recreational venue for the residents of the area and even draws walkers and cyclists from the Trenton area. In September

the Lower Trent Conservation Authority completed the surfacing of the connecting link and now we have a wheel chair accessible connection to the Bleasdell boulder. This was a joint project, which has extended the amount of useable trail and makes this section a destination for tourists and locals alike.

Surfacing: 95% of Ontario Realty Corporation managed section of the Lower Trent Trail has now been resurfaced, and this coupled with the soon to be completed Batawa waterline will mean that we will have 12 kilometers of continuous trail starting in Batawa and running through Frankford north to the Glen Ross road. The remaining 1 kilometer to the Lock at Glen Ross is owned by the city and recent discussions with the Head of Public Works make us hopeful that this final northern loop will be completed in 2011.

Batawa Waterline Section: FOTT was invited to participate in this project which when completed will supply the developed areas of Batawa plus the future development plans of Batawa Development Corporation with water from the Frankford Treatment station and provide cost savings by eliminating the Batawa Treatment plant. Most of the line runs on private land owned by BDC and they have stipulated that remediation of the dig will be done to standards commensurate with the rest of the Lower Trent Trail. We have lobbied the ORC on behalf of the City and the BDC to assist in resolving a routing problem and hope this will enable the project to be completed on time and at minimum costs

Benches and Gates: Now that we have completed the resurfacing of a large section of the Trail, almost 2 years ahead of schedule, we are looking to provide rest areas and interpretive signs for the trail users. We have had benches manufactured locally and have placed some at areas such as Station Park and Locks road. We will be purchasing more in the new year and hope to provide seating at suitable areas along the entire trail.

Hike Ontario Summit: We hosted the Hike Ontario Summit in November and had three days of activities, presentations, organized walks and a social evening. Once again the local community supported us with the City of Quinte West providing a venue for the presentations and lectures and The Batawa Ski Hill providing the use of their wonderful chalet for the Social activities. It was well attended by Hikers and Trail organizations from all over Ontario.

Surf and Turf: We worked with the 8 wing recreational staff to assist them in their annual fitness challenge, a grueling test with over 500 participants. The event was a huge success and they were very impressed with the portions of the Lower Trent Trail they used and look forward to increased participation next year.

MOU: We assisted the City of Quinte West in resolving an issue they had with providing secondary Emergency Services access to a dead end lane. By entering into an MOU between the Ontario Realty Corporation, the City and FOTT we have provided this access.

Batawa Water Front: We have continued to work with the Batawa Development Corporation and since the completion last Fall of the Business plan we have met with stakeholders and explored fund raising avenues with the goal of starting the on ground work in 2011. The City of Quinte West Public works department has been involved with the planning and is putting funds in their budget to complete some initial brushing and layout.

Golf Tournament: The Fourth Annual Golf Tournament was very successful and continues to be our major fundraiser for administrative funds. Funds that we need to pay the annual lease fee and Liability insurance. The numbers were down slightly this year but the local business community support was just extraordinary and continues to grow each year

Trillium Grant Application: We have submitted a major grant request to the Ontario Trillium Foundation, this will be used to start construction on the major staging area in Station Park and to resurface the bridges at Cold Creek with a steel mesh decking which will enhance safety and reduce the cost of maintenance the bridges.

Trail usage increases daily and we continue to receive very positive feedback. We look forward to next years program and its exciting challenges

Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association

Submitted by David Beevis

The Association consists of nine member clubs which maintain the 500 kilometre long Ganaraska Hiking Trail from Port Hope on Lake Ontario to Wasaga Beach on Georgian Bay. The Association is run by a Board of Volunteers drawn from the member clubs. The Association holds a Spring Executive Meeting and an Annual General Meeting in November. As of this August, total membership of the 9 clubs that make up the Association was 539, one less than in August 2009.

In February the President and Public Relations Director of the GHTA, together with the current and past president of the Pine Ridge Hiking Club and two founding members of the trail attended the public opening of the new Ganaraska Trail School in Port Hope. President Mike Pidwerbecki expressed the hope that the pupils and their families would use the resources provided by the Trail; PR Director Bob Bowles presented the school a framed map of the Ganaraska Trail, and; thanks to the efforts of Terri LeRoux of Hike Ontario, the school was also presented with two volumes of the teachers' resource kits from the Hike Ontario Young Hikers Programme.

For a second year, the Ganaraska Hiking Trail was selected to host the OXFAM Trailwalker Challenge when teams of four hikers complete 100 kilometres in 48 hours. A different stretch of the Trail was selected for use, requiring another focused maintenance effort to ensure a problem-free experience for those taking part. The event took place on the 23rd to 25th July. One hundred and eighteen teams started and 111 completed 100 kilometres of the Trail in less than 48 hours, the fastest in 19 hours and 27 minutes. The event raised \$445,248:00 for OXFAM. Many volunteers from other hiking clubs supported the event.

Two Board Director positions are currently vacant.

Grand Valley Trails Association

Submitted by Georgia Mulholland

The Grand Valley Trails Association 2009/10 hiking year has been another busy and event filled year – we have had some 190 hikes and events for members and friends to participate in.

We celebrate with the Carolinian Crest Club as they begin operations as chapter of the Grand Valley Trail Association. Establishing the Carolinian Crest Club begins to translate the GVTA strategic plan into reality. A healthy local hiking club will benefit the community and ensure the long term viability of the Grand Valley Trail Association as local members care for and enhance local trails. The Carolinian Crest Club has already been an active local chapter as they have helped relocate trail away from a bald eagle nesting site. The Club has also been working closely with community service organizations such as the Kiwanis to improve trails as well.

Fall 2009 saw the installation of a new cairn rock to mark the beginning of the Grand Valley Trail in Port Maitland. Both trail Director Ed Dennis and GVTA member Bill Haartman willingly contributed many hours of work to this project.

In November 2009 the GVTA and Upper Grand Trailway and Grand River Conservation Authority completed an agreement allowing GVTA access to the UGT. This is excellent progress in potentially moving the Grand Valley Trail into the Grand River Watershed, toward Luther Marsh and ever closer to the headwaters of the Grand River. Much appreciation to GVTA director Charles Whitlock and UGT direct Alex Vanderwijst.

All members and guests attending the GVTA 2009 Christmas party were treated to “that chickadee feeling” by author Frank Glew. It is truly awesome how nature can inspire us as Frank prompts us to notice in his book “that chickadee feeling”.

In January 2010 GVTA held another combined ski day with the Waterloo Region Nordic Sports Club. A total of 49 people skied the day away at Highlands Nordic Cross Country Skiing Centre.

During February 2010 the GVTA Board of Directors was approached by local Kiwanis clubs to work together on a joint community service project. A working relationship has been fostered with both the Brantford and Waterloo Kiwanis clubs with successful trail maintenance projects being completed in April.

It has been an inspiring and exciting year for the Grand Valley Trails Association and there are plenty of challenges and rewards just ahead.

Always hike!

Guelph Hiking Trail Club

Submitted by Mike Curtis

With the guidance of our new president, Kathy Somers, we have been steadily increasing our membership, which is now around the 200 mark. We have had a number of new initiatives this year, commencing with a very successful Trails Open event in April where we had a series of guided hikes, of various lengths, in Guelph. Over one hundred people participated in these hikes, resulting in several new memberships.

We conducted two “Kid’s Hikes”, one in spring and another in fall specifically geared to children. Both were very successful. The children had to bring at least one adult and snacks (healthy) were provided at the conclusion of the hike which lasted around 90 minutes and was around 3km. Several stops were made along the way to explain the various aspects of the trail, and answer the many questions of the young participants.

Our Club has revamped its website for 2010. We discontinued our telephone answering machine as it was getting little use. Many people now check for information and contacts on our website. We also have been e-mailing our members (who so desire) twice monthly updates and reminders of upcoming events.

During Ontario Hiking Week, we had a “New Members Night” where new and even slightly less new members were invited to learn more about the Club, its members and activities. Over fifty people were in attendance and new members were signed up as well.

As usual, we had our usual hiking programme which also included weekly evening hikes in the Guelph area in the late spring, summer and early fall. Our trail maintenance continues to ensure safe hiking trails and in doing so stumbled across a potential problem concerning geocaching. We have since developed a policy dealing with geocaching and our landowners which should address any potential concerns.

Humber Valley Heritage Trail Association

Submitted by Jerry Gorman

Organizational Matters

The HVHTA Annual General Meeting was held in April. The incumbent executive was re elected. The guest speaker was the well known hiking trail writer Kevin Callan. His illustrated presentation was informative, amusing and well received. Risk management was one of his topics.

The annual joint chapter meeting of Bolton and Kleinberg executives was hosted by the Bolton chapter in February. Eight members from Kleinberg, six from Bolton shared productive ideas and experiences while enjoying a pizza and beer dinner underwritten by the Bolton club. One outcome was an agreement to coordinate and publish a joint schedule of monthly hikes.

Regular executive meetings, open to the public were held monthly by HVHTA except during the 2 summer months. Our website was recently upgraded.

Paid up membership currently stands at 72. A lapse in follow up is acknowledged as a reason for a slight reduction in paid up members.

New Trail Developments

After 2 years of anticipation, a major land acquisition on the east side of Bolton by the Toronto Region Conservation Authority has cleared the way to open our proposed 3 km. loop in the main trail. In negotiations with the developer, a total of 110 hectares / 271 acres of Cold Creek valley lands, previously designated as environmentally significant was acquired for public ownership. Because the proposed HVHTA trail loop on an old right of way through this property will give public access to the entire tract, HVHTA has decided to ground truth the property and make recommendations to the Town of Caledon for a management plan to be developed for the entire property. HVHTA would propose opening up the less fragile areas of the property for public walking paths and trails.

An important accessory to the new 3 km. loop trail is the historically designated Sneath Road Bridge over the Humber River. This bridge which connects the loop to our existing HVHTA trail was recently saved from demolition due to perceived structural failure. The Town of Caledon has set aside money to repair the bridge to pedestrian standards in 2011.

Current Issues

The Bolton Resource Tract on which our trail is situated is still undergoing a management plan which has put any changes to the portion of the trail on the tract on hold. After two years of BRTM committee consultations, the first public open house meeting was held in June. Since then no further committee activity has taken place. Due to concerns of safety and maintenance HVHTA is stressing the need to retain our trail for pedestrian use only. A potential cycling route has been identified with two short locations of potential conflict where the cycle route uses the hiking trail. Two members of HVHTA who are members of this committee are monitoring this development.

Bill Wilson, a member of HVHTA executive is on the Hike Ontario Risk Management Committee. HVHTA is well acquainted with risk management issues and has been proactive in working to maintain the safe status of our trail.

Huronia Trails & Greenways

Submitted by Frieda Baldwin

Huronia Trails and Greenways (HTG) is a registered not-for-profit charitable corporation dedicated to promote and enable the development of a sustainable network of trails and greenways in Simcoe County, Ontario.

www.simcoecountytrails.net

Huronia Trails and Greenways (HTG) was founded as a result of a study conducted by the County of Simcoe in the early 90's to determine the future of the abandoned rail lines in Simcoe County. One of the recommendations was that an organization be formed to lobby for the preservation of abandoned rail lines in the County. With a few short exceptions, HTG was able to convince municipalities in the area to purchase the right of ways and turn them into trails. HTG then promoted the formation of trails committees and the development of trails. Most trail committees in the County operate as "Committees of Council" and are insured under the local municipal insurance. Some municipalities operate the trails themselves, and do not have a trails committee.

HTG was incorporated in 1992 as a charitable not for profit organization, which has representation on its board of members of trail user groups, trail building groups, municipalities, the health unit, the local naturalist club, etc.

In the last few years, HTG has focused its efforts on promoting the linear trails in the county, as well as create a number of loop trails, which encourage young families to walk, cycle or geocache in local forests, conservation areas, etc. The loop and linear trail map books, of which we printed 10,000 copies each, have been extremely well received, and are about to be reprinted. The maps are also available on HTG's website www.simcoecountytrails.net. Thanks to a grant from the Trillium Foundation, HTG also produced Trail Crossing signs, to promote trail access locations, and alert motorists of a trail crossing. The grant also provided funding to produce several web pages, entitled "Trails Experiences", which highlight all you need to know to enjoy a certain trail activity in the area. E.g. contact info for local trail user clubs, what you need as a beginner, where to go, etc. HTG also acts as a resource to trail management groups in the area, and as a point of contact for trail related issues in the area, such as for the new Recreational Use of the County Forests policy, signage in the forest, etc.

In 2009, Huronia Trails and Greenways is partnering with Tourism Simcoe, the tourism department of the County of Simcoe, on a \$200,000 project to

- conduct an inventory of trails in the county, and analyze the gaps in terms of building an interconnected well built trails network

- produce trail building and management guidelines for local municipalities
- develop signage standards and produce signs
- conduct a marketing campaign to promote trails and how they fit into an Active Transportation strategy.

Funding for this project is provided by the National Trails Coalition (federal stimulus funds) and by the County of Simcoe, each contributing \$100,000. This project is to be completed by March 31, 2010.

Lost River Walks, North Toronto Green Community

Submitted by Shachindra Tripathi

The **Lost River Walks** help people to appreciate their intimate connections to the water systems that form an essential part of their lives, and take people on a fascinating journey into our history. Lost River Walks are a great way to get to know your local watersheds – the first step to protecting their health. Since 1995 over 19,000 people have participated in Lost River Walks.

The North Toronto Green Community is one of many groups committed to restoring our urban watersheds to a state of healthy vibrant living habitat. Lost River Walks are a joint project of the NTGC, the Toronto Field Naturalists and community partners including Evergreen, Riversides, Taylor Massey Project, Friends of the Don East, TRCA, LEAF, Humber Heritage and others.

Lost Rivers 2009 to 2010:

Walks:

From October 1st 2009 to September 30th 2010 there were 31 walks with 942 participants. There were 26 volunteer walk leaders.

Outreach and Education:

As well as the Thirsty City Workshops (see www.thirstycitywalks.ca), we held special walks and or did presentations for the Heschel School, Waterlution, Alphabet City, TRCA Stewardship Conference, the Ministry of the Environment's Lunch and Learn Club, the Green Communities Association, Live Green Toronto Animators (and we were featured a Live Green Toronto video that made it to Copenhagen).

This year Lost Rivers was featured on **Alexandra Cousteau's Blue Planet (National Geographic)**.

<http://www.alexandracousteau.org/field/expedition-photos/photo-gallery-searching-lost-rivers-toronto>[7]

<http://www.alexandracousteau.org/current-expedition-blue-planet-2010/great-lakes/searching-lost-rivers-toronto>[8]

<http://www.alexandracousteau.org/field/expedition-photos/photo-gallery-searching-lost-rivers-toronto>[9]

WEBSITE:

We are fundraising to make the Lost Rivers Website even more amazing!

Please VOTE FOR US ON AVIVA!

<http://www.avivacommunityfund.org/ideas/acf5874>

Its easy to sign up and click once a day for ten days (each person gets ten votes – one per day for ten days). Last time we came in 20th in the world. If we can make it to the top ten we will get to the shortlist. We will be sending out and email next week, asking people to vote for us

(www.lostrivers.ca) : developed and launched in 2002 by Peter Hare, is a virtual tour of many of the lost rivers which form the main matrix of buried creeks for the Toronto between the Don and Humber Rivers. On this site you can find detailed maps of Burke Brook, Mud Creek, Yellow Creek, Castle Frank Brook, Walmsley Brook, Cudmore Creek, Taddle Creek, Russell Creek, Garrison Creek Lavender Creek , the Market Creeks, and the Lower Don along with links that tell the story of the geological and human history of each creek and its watershed.

New Lost Rivers Slide Shows:

Rain Gardens 101

Secret Life of Water in the City

Toronto's Historic Ecosystems

People:

Lost Rivers Committee:

Helen Mills, John Wilson, Emily Alfred, Shachindra Tripathi, Richard Anderson, Georgia Ydreos, Ian Wheal, Annie Macleod, Arlene Buehler, Wendy Southall, Imran Noorani, Paula Messina, Wei Yee

Volunteer Opportunities:

Lost Rivers is looking for enthusiastic volunteers with energy and ideas:

Responsibilities can include all or some of the tasks below:

- Developing and leading walks
- **Maintaining and updating the website**
- **Website development, and fundraising for this project**
- Help with publicity (writing emails, events listings, press releases, articles, distributing flyers, contacting community groups, maintaining lists, hosting a table for an event, creating a listserver)
- Help during walks– eg– welcome participants, help with getting walkers signed up, feedback forms

- Research and mapping of lost watersheds for development of walks and website content
 - Depending on interest other tasks/responsibilities may also be created
 - Attending meetings and possibly keeping minutes, with the Lost Rivers committee
- Work will take place at various locations. Work will occur on weekdays. Some weekend and evening work might be required.

Application Process:

Please email a resume and covering letter outlining your interest in this position to Paula Messina:
paula@torontogreen.ca

Maitland Trail Association

Submitted by Wendy Hoernig

Membership

Our annual membership slowly grew to 133 members – two down from last year. Many of these are family memberships. The membership includes a trail-work crew of 15 volunteers, and we have a full slate of Trail Rangers who each have a section of one of our trails to maintain and report on.

The addition of a Youth Representative on our Board of Directors has proven to be a successful decision. This grade 10 student is very keen, attends all meetings and is a valuable link with the high school, and in particular, its environmental club.

Our Year's Activities

- ◆ Last winter was fortunately much kinder to our trail, and there weren't any resulting major repairs needed. Minor landslide and bridge repairs have been carried out and a fine new outhouse was built & installed at a location along our trail where the landowner allows 'wilderness' camping.
- ◆ Our Trail-work crew's experiment to lay a 4' swath for a short section (.35 km) of stone dust on a section of our Goderich to Auburn Rail Trail, became a tougher slog because we discovered that to borrow and use Town of Goderich's spreader required a hydraulic hook-up. So the job was done with wheelbarrows, muscle power and by packing the section by driving over it with ordinary vehicles. The resulting trail coverage was successful, so we saved a substantial amount of money. We are planning to do one more section this Fall, but will be using a truck that can partially spread the stonedust as it dumps the load. This will still require 'fine-tuning' of the layer, but will be a somewhat easier job than last year. .
- ◆ A local keen hiker, was asked by the Goderich Art Club to lead them on a hike along our popular urban forest trail, the Maitland Woods. As a result, its members are going to create paintings of different areas or elements of the Maitland Woods, and then later will have an art show specifically of these works. That will be great P.R. for this trail.
- ◆ A local group of keen hikers and cyclists have begun a campaign hoping to obtain enough support to create a walking/cycling trail running parallel to the highway 21 from Goderich to Point Farms Provincial Park, north of town. (The Port to Point Trail) The Maitland Trail Assoc., the Town of Goderich, and the Township of Ashfield-

Colborne–Wawanosh support the idea. It will be a mammoth undertaking – hopefully the idea will continue to grow.

- ◆ We never did identify the rogue graffiti who inscribed his logo on well over 300 sites, including trees, signs, washroom walls and benches. He also wrote 22 negative or obscene messages on walls or signs. However to our relief, he hasn't been active this year.
- ◆ Our hikes have for the most part been very well attended and enthusiasm for our trails is strong. Groups and individuals continue take up and succeed in the challenge of hiking the Maitland Trail from end to end. (48+ km) We keep local hiking issues and events in the public eye through a bi-weekly column, 'Trail Talk' in a free publication that is sent to most homes in our county.

Challenges

This year's major challenge arose out of two major break-ins, into the large trailer that serves as our workshop and storage for tools and equipment. It is a refurbished insulated cargo container, (painted green and fondly nicknamed Kermit.) It is located in the large parking lot of our local Knights of Columbus Centre, which is in an industrial area, that sees very little traffic at night. Unfortunately its orientation also meant that the rear doors and the attached shed at the back could not be seen from the road. (The addition contained the generator, as we had no hydro hookup.) The first break-in resulted in the loss of all of our power tools and anything of any value stored there. (well over \$4000 worth) The men created further reinforcement that made these doors impossible to open even if the locks were broken off. A few weeks later, after failing to force the door of the generator shed, the thieves smashed in the ventilator window, wrenched out one of its reinforcing bars, and then apparently squeezed someone very small through the opening so that he could reach the deadbolt lock from the inside and open it. At the moment we are contemplating rotating the trailer so that it's access points can be seen from the road (an expensive procedure!) and also hoping to benefit from the proposed addition of security cameras on the K. of C. Centre. If you are contemplating a similar storage structure, hopefully our experiences will help prevent similar ones happening to you. (We also considered an alarm that would go off in the case of a forced entry – but with no homes in the vicinity, this idea seemed worthless.)

Nastawgan Trails Inc.

A non-profit community based organization that plans, establishes, maintains and promotes a four season non-motorized trail network which, in combination with 2400 km. of interconnected canoe routes, makes the Temiskaming area a world class recreational tourism destination. www.nastawgantrails.com

North Simcoe Rail Trail

Submitted by Frieda Baldwin

A 30 km recreational trail in Springwater Township, for all season.
www.simcoecountytrails.net

The North Simcoe Railtrail (NSRT) is managed by a group of volunteers, who were incorporated in 1993 as a not for profit charitable organization, called the North Simcoe Railtrail Inc.

On its management board are members of the SnoVoyageurs Snowmobile Club, the Brereton Field Naturalists of Barrie, Huronia Trails and Greenways, the Township of Springwater, and a number of other interested individuals, including a farmer who acts as the landowner relations liaison. The management board operates the 30 km long North Simcoe Railtrail under a 20 year lease with the Township of Springwater, who owns the abandoned railway corridor on which the trail is built. Permitted uses on the trail include walking, cycling, horseback riding, snowmobiling, skiing, snowshoeing, and nature appreciation.

In 2009, the North Simcoe Railtrail Inc. applied for funding to upgrade the remaining 7.2 km of the trail with limestone screenings, and build a new bridge over the Black Creek. Project cost is \$136,000. 50% of this funding is being provided by the National Trails Coalition (federal stimulus funds), \$30,000 from the County of Simcoe, \$12,000 from the Township of Springwater, \$10,000 from the local snowmobile club, and \$8,000 of the NSRT's own funds. This project started first week of November 2009, and will be completed by December 2009.

Oak Ridges Trail Association

Submitted by Stan Butcher

Changes. Our Membership appears to have stabilized around 580.

There has been a noticeable increase in the ethnic diversity of participants in our group hikes.

A long time Trail Director, Peter Schaefer, is now President, allowing me to function as Past President! We noted the passing of Bob Ellison who had contributed so much to the development of ORTA and Hike Ontario prior to his latter services to the Bruce Trail.

Development. The 5th Edition of our Guidebook was published on January 1st, marking the completion of our trail across the Moraine. Some blazing remains to be completed.

In recent weeks, with funding from the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation, we have opened Trail Gateways at the west entrance to the Northumberland Forest, and in the east at Warkworth and Castleton. A western Gateway at Mono Mills, where we join the Bruce Trail, is being planned for installation next spring.

The newer sections of the trail are mainly through regional forests or along unopened road allowances and are subject to formal agreements signed with the landowners; typically these are for 5 years duration.

Fund Raising. A Volunteer Committee proved to be up to the challenge of organizing our Fourth Adventure Relay on Saturday 19th June. Participation again increased with 32 teams passing through 14 check points manned by some 80 members.

Future Directions. We are in the process of reverting to operating solely as a volunteer organization. As part of this we are reducing the size of our Board; over time we anticipate there being four Regions rather than the previous ten Chapters.

Prior to 2004 we were an organization of “no fixed address.” Having come to appreciate having an office shared with other Oak Ridges Moraine organizations at The Gate House, Seneca College’s King Campus, we intend to continue this arrangement. Volunteers will use this facility for maintaining records, accounting and providing member services.

Outing Club of East York

A non-profit, volunteer-run organization dedicated to helping people stay fit and enjoy outdoor activities year-round. The club runs full programs of canoeing, hiking, cycling, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, skating, city walks, and social events for its members across the GTA. <http://www.outingclubofeastyork.org>

Palmerston Trail Association

Submitted by Barbara Burrows

The Palmerston Trail Association has a membership of approximately 30 families. This number has remained steady over the years. We are now in our twelfth year of operation and usage of our trail is up considerably!

Over the past year we have been busy with various fund-raising and trail improvement projects. We now have barrier gates at all access points and they make the trail itself much more visible. Our two trestle bridges are in good shape and prove to be a destination point for many walkers. The last section of trail was stone dusted last year and is now open to complete a seven kilometre stretch. There is a shorter loop option for people who can't walk that distance. Enhanced trail signage will be done yet this fall and we hope to make our Main Street presence more visible.

In September our local secondary school and Terry Fox organizers, used White's Junction Trail for the Terry Fox Run. Thanksgiving Monday there will be a guided walk detailing the rail history and natural environment along the trail.

We hope to have more trail events in the coming year and will try to keep our reports up to date.

Happy hiking!

Rideau Trail Association

Submitted by Ron Hunt

Kilometres of Trail¹: 350

Membership²: 976 (+1%) as of October 2010

Highlights:

- Installed new trail access signage for both private and public land
- Followed through on the recommendations in the Trail Quality Task Force Report, with emphasis on relocating sections of the trail off busy roadways
- Filled vacancies on the RTA Board: Secretary, Newsletter Editor (Kingston) and Vice President
- Completed independent review of the RTA financial statements for 2008–2009
- Began designing the 8th edition of the Rideau Trail Guidebook
- Reviewed Leader training and related procedures
- Published Nicolsons Locks brochure in partnership with Parks Canada
- Enabled online donations from the RTA web site
- Developed a privacy policy
- Initiated planning for the 40th anniversary activities.

Rouge Park Trail Club

Submitted by Diana Smyth

CURRENT TRAIL ACTIVITIES:

The Rouge Park guided walks have grown since our first report in May 2010.

As of the end of September, we have welcomed over 800 walkers, the majority of whom are coming out for the first time, having found out that Rouge Park offers guided walks. Once someone has come for that first walk, we are happy to many walkers return for at least one more outing.

Rouge Park is an ecological park, home to public walking areas coexisting with natural habitat areas, restoration areas, areas with rare plant species and areas for undisturbed natural growth. Our guided walks have a goal to help our visitors understand and appreciate what that means in terms of how they enjoy and experience

¹ Main Trail is 306 km. in length. Remainder is side trails.

² Individual, Family and Life memberships.

the Park via our trails. This includes the reinforcement of good trail practices and etiquette in addition to our interpretation of the natural environment in which we walk.

We also meet many visitors who are newcomers to Canada, or to the areas around Rouge Park. We embrace this as an opportunity to step back and really showcase what a special place Rouge Park is, and not to take for granted what people know or don't know about walking in a natural area. We hope to spark a sense of stewardship for the Park in these new visitors... and all those who join us on the trail.

Since our first report in May, our volunteer walk leader roster has increased from 15 to 23, and our walks offerings have increased from 16 to 28 per month, now adding Sundays to our schedule.

Work on our comprehensive Trails Master Plan is progressing, with the first public meetings slated for October 20 and 21 in Toronto and Markham. At these meetings we will share with the public our recommendations from field work and environmental mapping, and gather input from the public on the vision of a Park-wide trails network that links to neighbouring communities in Markham, Pickering and Toronto.

Street To Trail Association

Submitted by Paul Mackle

The Street to Trail Association (herein STT) is a federally incorporated, non-profit organization that takes homeless people out of their urban setting of Toronto for short periods of time and provides them with excursions into Ontario's wilderness settings. Empowerment is a word authentically used to describe the group's aim. STT believes in a tandem approach: by renewing self-worth and trust through experiences in nature, and by establishing supportive social networks focused on self-sufficiency in the city and in the wilderness, participants who have gotten off the right track in life can finally perceive themselves in a whole and capable way, and be encouraged to make better decisions about their life-directions. www.street-to-trail.com

The Street to Trail Association operates on the assumption that the synergy of nature, community and exercise exert positive, often life-changing influences on those whose lives present challenges for survival amidst an unforgiving urban landscape. Based on several months of community-based research into the homeless population of Toronto, the authors have observed that the ramifications of Street to Trail Association's collective hikes, and the cooperative relationships created through both nature outings and ground support at Toronto's shelters, extend far beyond the given activities and the individual. A paper published this year by Street to Trail entitled "An Inquiry

into Public Health and Health Promotion” attempts to explore these emergent connections within the contexts of public health and public policy.

Street to Trail began over eight years ago when Paul’s appreciation for the psychologically soothing effects of nature and his love of helping people became unified. Paul had been volunteering in shelters and soup– kitchens for many years, building a foundation of trust with the street people of Toronto while becoming familiar with the issues that plagued their living conditions. By definition, people experiencing homelessness are stranded within street life and its milieu of dangers, as well as a constant dependency on others for basic necessities--- for shelter, food, water, medicine and education. Paul witnessed the destitution of their everyday lives, and wondered what would occur if street life were intercepted by a nature outing with those of similar circumstances. Working with what one might refer to as the *vis medicatrix naturae* (the healing power of nature), Paul started taking some of the people he met on hikes to gauge the responses to such an outing. For Paul, the internal and intra–personal changes he observed in their behaviour and character were immediate; the participants started to observe and take in their surroundings, walk with more confidence and interact with one another in more trusting, humorous and dignified ways.

To this day, Paul maintains a highly dedicated 80–hour work week. About half of this time is spent in drop–in shelters and on the streets, talking to people about the program, establishing new friendships and relationships, and listening to their current struggles. Paul offers information about these people on hikes. He readily shares photo albums from previous group hikes that aide in telling the stories of many people who have benefitted from their experience with STT. Paul is acutely aware that many of those with whom he speaks are dealing with substance abuse issues, and with isolation and/or safety issues. One of reasons why Paul is so devotedly reliable in maintaining a regular, anchoring presence at many of the city’s drop–in shelters is to follow up on those people whose lives are in turmoil---Did they stay sober today? Did they find the housing they were talking about, or have they disappeared? Paul is an independent agent of their best interests, helping these people to assess the situations they are faced with, follow through on productive ideas, and discontinue harmful relationships and patterns. However, Paul never forces or coerces people to participate; they must present self–initiative and a willingness to respect STT’s rules, the first of which is a zero–tolerance policy towards drugs and alcohol. The rest of Paul’s week is spent doing STT errands, such as picking up food and supplies for hikes, or lobbying to private donors to help fund the organization’s efforts, which has always been an important activity, but has become even more critical in the current economic times.

In spite of STT's impressive portfolio of social services, STT it is not without its own challenges. As often occurs with charitable organizations, money is the limiting factor for STT's growth and fulfillment of tasks. Fiscally, \$68,000 barely covers one year of STT activities. This is just enough to fund equipment, van rentals, gas, driver's fees, food and Paul's modest salary. It must be mentioned that Paul took on this salary (which, upon examination, is but a stipend) in late 2006 at the insistence of an STT board member since Paul was offering everything he had for the sake of the population he was serving. For more than six years, Paul, who is not independently wealthy, devoted his own resources to STT and never asked anything for himself, which is yet another testament to his dedication to help mankind. Paul's wife also works full-time for the organization as a non-paid volunteer. As a team, they offer all of their time and energy to STT, and exist on very little, but for how long can this situation continue without an improvement in their own welfare? Even though STT has an amazing effect in many peoples' lives, STT's application for federal funding has consistently been turned down in each of the past three years when they have applied. Additionally, some of the trails that the group frequents have begun to charge for day hikes, leading to a relatively significant increase in expenses when taking 10 to 15 people at a time. Paul worries about the organization's activities for the upcoming summer as no major source of funding was received last year.

Thames Valley Trail Association

Submitted by Maureen McGauley

- Yearly average membership 349
- Trail maintenance - more than 500 man-hours in 2010, including blazing, inspecting and reporting, brushcutter training, repairing or building bridges and boardwalks, installing steps, clearing trail. 4 samples of vegetation sent for examination turned out to be Angelica or Cow Parsnip - no giant Hogweed at this time.
- Currently we are looking for storage facilities for our PR display equipment and organizing archival material.
- We are seeking candidates for 5 vacant board positions, including webmaster.
- We are hoping to create an inventory and sign-out system for our train maintenance equipment.
- 36 members are currently receiving our newsletter electronically. This is a voluntary choice.
- We had 49 participants at our annual picnic.
- Our PR team participated in more than 5 community events in 2010
- A total of 19 people participated in 2 end-to-end hikes: - one was over several consecutive days and the other was done in monthly stages.

- Training for Safe Hiker and Hike Leader courses was done in October with 6 people in total.
- Risk Mangement strategies and concerns were discussed at several board meetings
- Trail Guides continue to sell well in local business locations
- In November, we donated \$5000 to the Thames Talbot Land Trust to be used toward the successful purchase of the Tanager Tract, a 100 acre Carolinian hardwood forest, in order to protect the area.

Thunder Bay Hiking Association

Submitted by Peter Summers

The TBHA promotes recreational hiking and related seasonal activities such as cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and backpacking in the Thunder Bay area.
www.tbha.ca

We do not own a trail. Our outing's are on crown land, provincial parks, private land (with permission), Lakehead Region Conservation Authority lands, Voyageur Trail, and on the Superior Hiking Trail in Minnesota.

of member's 160 paid memberships, 230 members, 4 honorary lifetime memberships.

of current board members 14

Total # of volunteers & annual volunteer hour's 50 volunteers, 1,000 volunteer hours.

of guided hikes & organized activities 45

Notable Achievements

1. Trail Guide (2007) – sales are very good.
2. 25th Anniversary Potluck Dinner/Club Photo Presentation – Annual Meeting – September 14, 2009
3. 25th Anniversary Logo for outdoor clothing.
4. Welsh Mountain Trail – trail maintenance.
5. Canoe Clinic for club members, with the Ontario Recreation Canoe Association.
6. Exploring existing/new trails in the Nipigon area, with our Nipigon volunteers.
7. Our volunteers/members, inviting outing participants back to their home/camp after an outing.
8. www.tbha.ca sponsored by Thunder Bay Telephone.

9. Hiking Hotline: 624-4271 sponsored by CRC Communications
10. Increased participation in kayak/canoe outings.
11. Mountain bike/hike outings have been successful.
12. Member photos of club outings put on our website.

Major issues facing our club: Recruiting volunteers for our volunteer board.

How Hike Ontario can assist our club: Hike Ontario is a valuable resource to our club by providing our club with both web based and written information on what it takes to operate a successful club.

Voyageur Trail Association

Submitted by Carole Blaquiere

The VTA has hosted a number of successful events this year including a geo-caching event in May with over 30 people attending. There was also a hike leadership course in May with twenty-two participants registered in a full-day training session facilitated by Wendy Hoerning, a Hike Ontario trainer. Two members continued with the training and became hike leader trainers. Other events over the summer included a Day at the Cottage with the Coureurs de Bois Club members and Paddler's Rendezvous on St. Joseph's Island. A special event was the Jim Miller dedication ceremony on June 12, 2010. The City of Sault Ste. Marie and the Sault Trails Advocacy Committee hosted the official opening and dedication of the James S. Miller Trailhead and the Finn Hill section of the Hub Trail located in Sault Ste. Marie.

The Voyageur Trail Association's Annual General Meeting was held on October 2nd and we voted in favour of a change in our constitution which will allow/require our president to be one of the three vice presidents in a rotating roster. Currently Alan Day Vice President East is our President. All positions were filled except for recording secretary.

A new committee was formed to update our website in the near future. The first new item is the introduction of a calendar to the existing website.

Membership stands at 144. This represents a drop of 29 memberships since this time last year which may reflect the absence of a publicity director. We were fortunate in recruiting a publicity director at our most recent AGM.

Financial Report

Submitted by Ron Knight

Treasurer's Report to the Hike Ontario Annual Summit for the Year Ended June 30, 2009

Our Trust Fund started out with \$12,331. Donations of \$11,110 were received, funds transferred in of \$205 and \$7,500 was transferred out to the operating account to cover designated charitable activities, leaving us with \$16,146 in the Trust bank account at June 30/09.

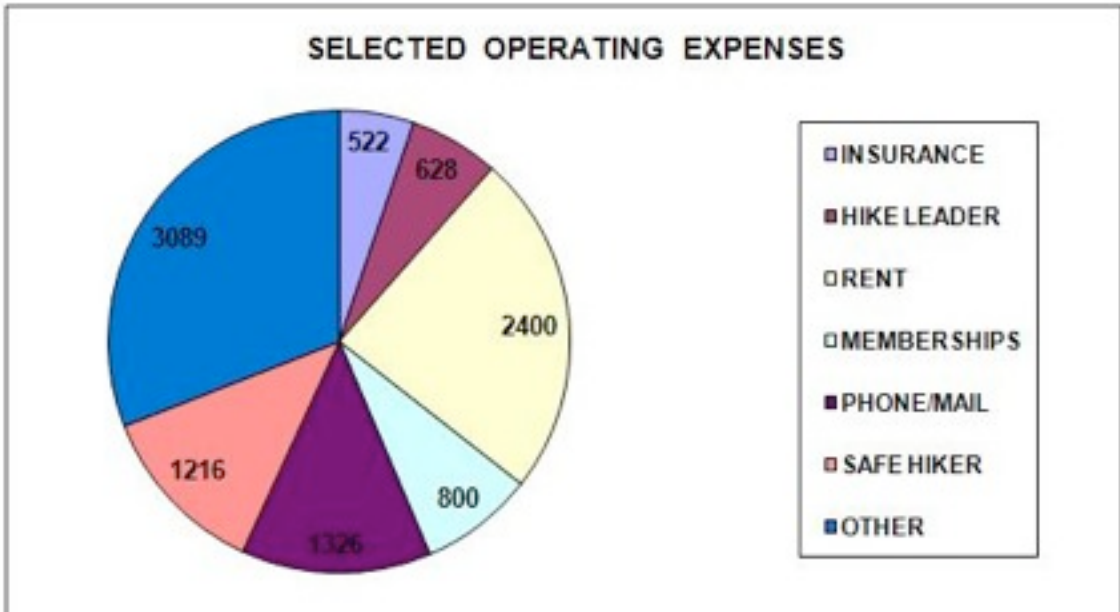
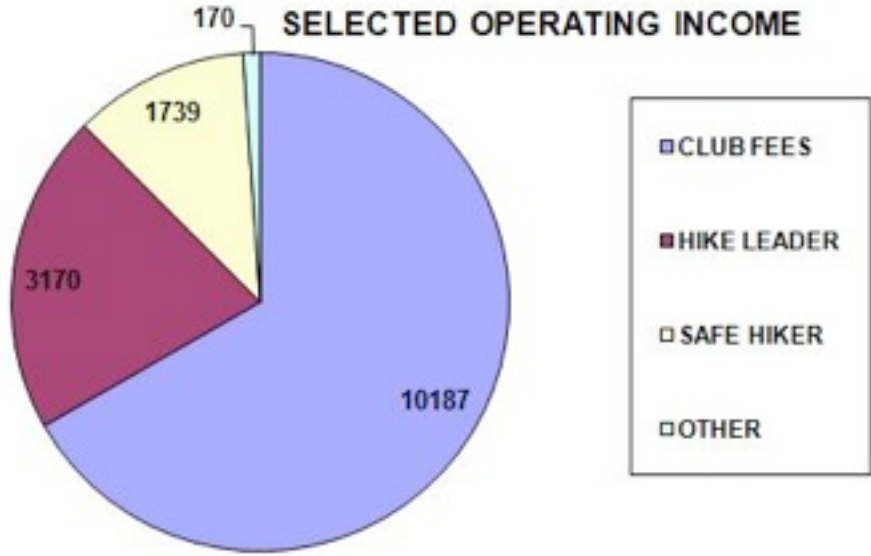
This year's operating income of \$66,321 with expenses of \$56,926 contributed a surplus of \$9,395 to our operating balances.

If we exclude the club insurance programme, the Trust transfer, mileage expenses (often donated back) and the Grant projects from income and expenses, we are left with our normal operating funds. These are shown in the pie charts presented here. Incomes of \$15,267 and expenses of \$9,981 indicate that our normal operations are self-sustaining at this time.

The Club insurance programme shows fees of \$40,400 and expenses of \$38,795 for a net recovery of \$1,605 for the year.

The bank balance at the end of June 2009 shows an amount of \$28,825 with no liabilities, making all of it available for future operations.

BDO Dunwoody, a third party accounting firm has compiled more detailed financial statements which are available to attendees at the Summit and Friends of Hike Ontario at any time.



Volunteer of the Year Awards

Each year, countless Ontarians volunteer their time, energy, creative and professional talents to enhance Ontario's hiking and walking opportunities. These individuals devote endless hours to serve on committees, champion important issues and causes, coordinate events and/or donate their business expertise and resources to further the positive growth and development of Ontario's pedestrian based trail network.

Annually, Hike Ontario recognizes four individuals who have contributed significantly to the success of a club program or project in one or more of the following areas: Advocacy, Marketing, Public Relations, Governance, Trail Development, Events, Risk Management, Land Securement or Landowner Relations, Fundraising and/or Hike Leadership.

RECIPIENTS OF THE 2009 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS ARE:

Pauline Copleston, Grand Valley Trails Association

Pauline is a key volunteer on the GVTA communications team. She manages the mail that comes to the post office box and builds and maintains the GVTA Membership Database for about 400 members.

Pauline is the volunteer who sends members their membership card, takes care of donation receipts and makes sure there are labels ready for the newsletter and other mailings that are sent to members.

Pauline is an invaluable member to the Board of Directors. She provides the board with monthly statistic reports of new and renewed memberships and will give board members custom reports that help them communicate with the membership.

Pauline is presently a member of a team that is updating a volunteer data base that will help the board reach out to volunteers in a more efficient way. Pauline is also a certified hike leader for the GVTA who regularly contributes hikes to the hiking program. Members and the board are grateful for her prompt and reliable service.

Ed Dennis, Grand Valley Trails Association

Ed serves on the Board of Directors as Trail Director for the Towpath. He manages about 65 km of trail. This is not an easy job since there are very few members in Haldimand County. Ed maintains most of the wooded trails himself but calls on members of the Carolinian Crest and Black Walnut to help him with the heavier work.

Ed organizes work parties to help clear out dead trees, cut grass and make new trails. In 2008 he helped implement the opening of a new trail through Ruthven Park National Historic Site and the establishment of the new route behind the Gingerbread House. Along with these two projects the trail across the road from Ruthven was reinstated to the woodlot. Most recently, Ed was responsible for moving the southern terminus of the trail from Rock Point Provincial Park to the mouth of the Grand River thus making the trail more accessible to the public.

Ed has represented the GVTA with the Brant Waterways Foundation and at Haldimand County Trails meetings. He is well informed about trail management in the Towpath by other organizations. Ed, more than anyone in the GVTA, is aware of the long stretches of road that continue to keep us from an optimum route, but he is always researching land owner acquisitions and looking for ways to get the trail off the road. Since Ed became a member of the board he has directed 3 major improvements to the Towpath.

This year, in another effort to support the GVTA, Ed organized a survey of lapsed GVTA members in order to help improve membership retention.

Dave Gillians, Bayfield River Valley Trail Association

Dave had the idea for the Bayfield Trails , and has worked tirelessly with politicians , landowners and trail members to make the Bayfield Trails a success. BRVTA was nominated as Huron Tourism Marketer of the Year this past year.

Dave has a wonderful talent to motivate people, and to seek out people to take on projects that are new to them . As well as endless bushwacking , looking for new routes , he works with landowners, marketing brochures , writes and produces the newsletters. He put together a group of 15 trail workers that worked 1 to 2 days a week on the trails. He is a great motivator, with a tremendous sense of focus to get the job done. In organizing work parties and materials he makes them fun events that workers want to come back to. This winter the BRVTA had to build 60 feet of staircase on a continuously weeping hillside. Dave organized the work parties through the winter, in a lot of mud , and people had a great sense of pride and enjoyment.

In his roles as president of the Historical Society, Dave fascinates people with the rich history of the Bayfield area, and had the idea to have the Heritage Trail, which winds through the village, stopping at a number of historical plaques. Dave is moved by what others have done in the past and is always driven by what legacy we can leave for others " while I stil have some gas in the tank ". The BRVTA appreciate the opportunity to nominate Dave Gillians, and think he is an outstanding candidate.

Friends of Hike Ontario

Hike Ontario relies on donations and the efforts of our volunteers to sustain and further our programs. Invaluable programs such as:

- Young Hikers Program
- Hike Leader Certification
- Safe Hikers Program
- Best Practices Research
- Volunteer of the Year Awards
- Ontario Hiking Week
- Annual Hiking Summit & Conference
- Helping local hiking and trail clubs with organizational and complex liability and insurance issues.

When you make a donation of \$25.00 or more to Hike Ontario, you automatically become a Friend of Hike Ontario and you join a network of people, from Ontario and beyond, who are committed to protecting, restoring, enjoying and sharing the joys and beauty of hiking and walking in Ontario.

Friends of Hike Ontario help us:

- Protect the precious hiking trails and foot paths of Ontario
- Advocate for the responsible management of Ontario's public lands and the creation of more hiking and foot paths
- Encourage conservation and appreciation of the natural environment by connecting Ontarians to the nature around them
- Educate adults and youth and provide them with the resources to inform and motivate them to conserve Ontario's trails
- Encourage walking for recreation, transportation and health
- Encourage good trail maintenance and hiking practices
- Encourage and facilitate the development of trail building and hiking clubs in Ontario
- Maintain and disseminate information on hiking and hiking trails

We graciously accept donations of any amount and our Friends are recognized for the cumulative donations they make over the years.

Charitable tax receipts will be issued for all donations and special events and recognition gifts have also been planned for each category.

Our Friends

Hike Ontario is pleased to recognize the valuable financial contributions made by the following Friends of Hike Ontario in the period January 1, 2006 and October 31, 2009.

The donor category shown for each Donor is based on the cumulative amount of the donations they have made as a Friend.

SHERPA (Cumulative donations between \$5000 to \$\$9999)

Terri & Jay LeRoux Harold Sellers

TRAIL BLAZER (\$2000-\$4999)

Tom Friesen Henry Graupner Mountain Equipment Co-op

BUSHWHACKER (\$800-\$1999)

Todd Bardes

NAVIGATOR (\$250-\$799)

Bruce Trail Conservancy Bruce and Ruth Calvert Michael Curtis
Rebecca Ling Walter Pitton

HIKER (\$25-\$249)

David Armitage	James Irwin	Cindy Fisher
Jocelyn Baynes	the late Virginia Johnson	Angelika Gollnow
Richard Boehnke	Pamela Marsales	Tom Hall
the late Peter Brama	Oscar MacDonald	Bill and Maria Haartman
Bruce Tilden	Jeff Hovis	Helen Dinovo
Robert Ellison	Miriam Stevens	Wendy and Heinz Hoernig
Anthony and Joyce Topley	Dorothy A. Denure	Rolande Smith
Iris and Larry Hofmeister	Ravi Vankatesh	Peter Burbridge
James Mortimer	Jackie and Allan Campbell	Erin
Muldoon		
Patrick Capper	Betty and Bill Murdoch	Ron
Casier		
Helen Pathy	Susan Chan	Wanda Pelletier
Mike Cicchini	Roger Ratcliff	Fiona Cowles
Cyril Cripps	Malcolm J. Sanderson	Don
Danby		
Wilgaard Schiffers	Bill Davies	Linda Sloan

Diana Smyth
Kenneth Sutton

Elizabeth Ross
Kim Strong

John Timar

Hike Ontario also wishes to thank the many individuals and organizations that have made donations in support of our programs and services, that choose to remain anonymous.

**The longest journey begins with a single step, not with a turn of the ignition key. That's the best thing about a walking, the journey itself. It doesn't much matter whether you get where you're going or not. You'll get there anyway. Every good hike brings you eventually back home. Right were you started.”
-- Edward Abbey**



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