



A vigorous five-mile walk will do more good for an unhappy but otherwise healthy adult than all the medicine and psychology in the world.

~Paul Dudley White

Annual Report



2010 - 2011

Get Outside. Get Healthy. Hike.

Hike Ontario

Annual Report 2010-2011

www.hikeontario.com

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 2010 –2011

Bill Wilson	President
Luis Costa	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 2010-2011

David Francis	Certification Committee
Victoria Arshad	Public Education Committee
Ron Scanlan	Issues, Policy & Advocacy Committee
Vacant	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 Scanlan	Bruce Trail Association
Diane Crooks	Durham Outdoors Club
Bill Clifford	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)
Jeremy Bonnar	Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association
Charles Whitlock	Grand Valley Trails Association
Mike Curtis	Guelph Hiking Trail Club
Jerry Gorman	Humber Valley Heritage Trail Association
Deena Brooks	Huron Trails & Greenways & North Simcoe Rail Trail
Shachindra Tripathi	Lost River Walks, North Toronto Green Community
Bruce Lamb	Lucan Area Trails Association
Mava Holland	Maitland Trail Association
Marvin Morison	Nastawgan Trails
Frieda Baldwin	North Simcoe Rail Trail
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 Blaquiere	Voyageur Trail Association
Fred Witwoet	4 Day Evening Walk Committee

COMPASS 2010

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
- Measurable

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Hike Ontario board of director's reviews, reflects and evaluates our success in reaching our goals at each quarterly meeting. The document is a living, active document that establishes our priorities.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Submitted by Bill Wilson

Hike Ontario has had several challenges during 2011. Our multi-talented all-volunteer Executive nevertheless succeeded in rising to these challenges very well.

We required a **Business Plan** to assess Hike Ontario's ability to fund a part time office administrator primarily to facilitate **certification training** and promotion. Early on, with Treasurer Asvin Parsad's advice, we determined that hiring an office administrator is not yet feasible at this time. Tom Friesen and David Francis, however, were able to work with volunteers to accomplish certification tasks with the incentive of payment for piece work.

Hike Ontario, with Treasurer Asvin Parsad's help, submitted a grant application on July 1st to **Ontario Trillium Foundation** for funds to help promote Hike Ontario programs. I regret to say that we were declined. However, we will continue to look for new ways to promote safe hiking and walking to the public at large.

Hike Ontario **Website** updates and email distribution have been hampered by service provider problems. Luis Costa has begun to set us up with a more responsive website service.

Hike Ontario succeeded in providing Liability and Director's and Officer's **insurance** this year with a new broker (Pearson Dunn) with comparable coverage **AND** at one third the cost of previous years, thanks to the efforts of Brendan Zamojc.

Hike Ontario has now in place a **Risk Management Support Program** for all its clubs. The purpose of this program, under Brendan Zamojc's leadership, is to encourage and guide hiking clubs to create an on-going Risk Management Plan for hike leading as well as the planning, building and maintenance of their trails. Thanks to Ron Scanlan for engaging an Ottawa legal firm to review Hike Ontario's new Risk Management guide on a Pro Bono basis. The firm's review was very favourable.

I am pleased to report that seven Hike Ontario clubs have contributed enough trail cost information to make a statistically-significant estimate of what all our Hike Ontario hiking clubs offer every year to Ontario citizens by maintaining their trails. We estimate that **Hike Ontario clubs deliver at least \$1 million worth of service annually, free of tax payer cost, to their communities throughout Ontario**. This certainly is a public contribution to a healthy life style and environmental stewardship worthy of flaunting!

Hike Ontario **Summit and AGM planning** has been proceeding well for the Elliot Lake venue this year. Tom Friesen's considerable efforts here promise to make this year's Summit a most memorable one.

Finally I wish to recognize the excellent service of three HO Executive members who are leaving us this year. David Francis has long been HO's first and last word on hike leading certification.

We trust David can continue to help us from time to time to advise us on training matters. Victoria Arshad is leaving us from the Public Relations chair. We trust Victoria can continue to help us by referring some of the talented young people she sees at University of Toronto. Angela Liu has provided us with excellent records of all our meetings for the last two years and has generally added good value to our Executive discussions. Thanks to you three again!

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Submitted by Luis Costa

Hike Ontario Website Updates

The website update process is working, however turnaround times from the web administrator have been a bit slower recently, taking upwards of 3 weeks. Tom has agreed to take on this role while I'm away. To the best of my knowledge, email and other aspects of the site are working without issue. Awaiting quote from Brendan's brother for the transition of our site to his brother's hosting service (don't remember the name of the company)

Our next steps will be to continue to work with our web administrator to update site and monitor response and have an executive review proposal from Brendan's brother and determine next steps.

2011 Annual Hike Ontario Summit

Tom has been running with most of the tasks for this. I have agreed to help with the transition meeting that Ron suggested. Picture submissions have been trickling in. I provided Tom with a list of those that have already sent in their pictures for the summit.

We are awaiting specifics of transition meeting (final agenda, with time allocations) from Ron. From there I will create / prepare my material for the meeting.

Technical Administration Manual

Currently on Hold pending decision to keep existing provider or migrate to a new one
I started putting together an Administration manual for Continuity & Succession planning. Details gathered and documented include key website information such as Domain Account Information, Website Admin Login, etc.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Certification Committee

Submitted by David Francis

I started with Hike Ontario in September 1991 as a board member for the Ganaraska Hiking Trail. This meeting was held in the meeting room of the Sports Alliance Building on Eglinton Ave.

After my term as president, I took over the Certification Committee. I first took the hike leader course in 1993 at Seneca College taught by Clare Magee, whom I now meet at the Newmarket Seniors Centre where I play badminton. The course started on Friday evening and ended at 5 pm on Sunday, taking three days and costing \$136. I was the only club member to take the course; the others were students at Seneca College and other outdoor education programs. Over the next two years I took two more courses, all three days long, and in those days known as Level 1, 2 & 3. The final one was the instructor course.

In 1997 the Certification Committee met at the Log Cabin at Seneca College for its meetings, its main purpose to condense the three day course into one day, and to drop the price so that it would appeal to club members. This was eventually achieved and began to attract a wider audience.

The name of the course was changed to the Standard Hike Leader, then to the Certified Hike Leader. We struggled for a long time to find the right formula for creating an Instructor Course, but there was little demand and eventually arrived at our current model which is for a new instructor to co-teach a course with an established instructor, then if successful, to have a probationary period on three new courses before being acclaimed as a full instructor. Instructors must register with HO every year for \$25 to maintain their status. An instructor may teach any course that they have already been trained on.

The Safe Hiker program was suggested by Deanna Rando in May 2007 after she attended the CHL course in Caledon at the Tai Chi Centre. She worked on the course development and funding was found by Tom Friesen to run a course for instructors in London in 2008. The program now has 43 instructors compared with 13 for the Hike Leader courses. The plan was to kick start the program by having many Safe Hiker instructors, but there has been a lack of response by instructors to put on courses, and demand has been weak.

We make the Safe Hiker Certification a prerequisite for the CHL course, but nearly all administrators request exemption for their students under the substantial previous experience clause. So at the present time the Safe Hiker program is stalled unable to find the right market niche. I think the cost of the course, \$75, is a barrier, but the cost of running the course is higher than the CHL course due to the program content.

As a prerequisite for the CHL, it turns this into a \$150 price point which is too steep for most club members.

I think the SH program has potential, but it still needs to find its market niche for the program to be successful. I believe we may have produced a Cadillac model, when the market really needs a Ford model. I think we should investigate trimming the course down to four hours and reducing the price to \$40.00. I think the course could also incorporate training for sweeps who have often expressed this need. We might also wish to look at the name to find one that might appeal more to the marketplace. Maybe drop the word "Safe" and just have Hiker Certification, or Learn to Hike, or Introduction to Hiking. This is more of a marketing decision, but one that needs looking at. Clearly the current model is not working.

To bring some order into the registration of programs, we have established an online registration system. Previously some instructors would run a course and only report this after the fact, some clubs would approach instructors without HO knowing about it, and there was no distinction between an instructor and an administrator.

We now formally recognize the role of the administrator who is locally based and makes all the arrangements for the course including classroom, registration and fees. We are please to announce that we have now recruited our first Certification Program Administrator, Paul Bateson.

The instructor's role is to teach the course and arrange for the badges and certificates for those successful students, and report these details to Hike Ontario. In some cases, the instructor might also take on the role of the administrator.

It has taken a while for course administrators to understand and register their courses, but I think this is now standard practice. The new program administrator will follow up from the course administrator, place the courses into the HO system, assign an instructor and place the course onto the web site, register with MEC and correspond with the course administrator on any questions that might be asked. The person should also track instructors and hike leaders, and manage the re-certification program

The Chair of the Certification Committee should administer the committee to develop policy, update manuals, keep courses current, promote the courses, and report to the executive and board. This is a big enough job and this person should not also be the program administrator.

For the rest of 2011 we have three courses so far, Oct 22 and Nov 12 & 13.

Over my time with Hike Ontario I have met many wonderful people and made some good friends. I will miss the many friends I have made, but wish Hike Ontario the very best for the next 20 years and beyond.

Issues, Policy and Advocacy Committee

Submitted by Ronald Scanlan

The incoming committee embraced the Hike Ontario brand of stewardship advocated by the committee's outgoing chair, Bill Wilson who said, "locals are attracted by taking virtual ownership of the trail..."

Over the past year, the committee engaged in a variety of activities including interest in a letter sent to Minister Bentley at Queen's Park last April by past President Tom Friesen. The letter addressed insurance alternatives for hiking clubs; issues surrounding trail use; issues surrounding incoming accessibility legislation; and requested and/or suggested actions the provincial government could take to alleviate the financial burden on local hiking clubs.

The committee continues to follow the development of Ontario's disability legislation as it impacts persons with disabilities who wish to use Ontario's hiking trails.

The GTA West Corridor Environmental Assessment held a consultation period over the winter. The Hike Ontario executive did not make a submission.

The president's call for trail maintenance cost data from Hike Ontario clubs was met with mitigated results. The data collection was being conducted, in part, to help inform this year's insurance overhaul initiative. Brendan Zamojc, who coordinated the insurance initiative, was successful in pulling some of the club data together.

The committee helped the executive contact pro bono legal counsel based in Ottawa. The counselor helped the executive by conducting an assessment of its draft risk management manual.

The committee drafted a Hike Ontario planning framework to help it plan its annual summit. The document was presented to the executive and board for approval then submitted it to the owner the Public Education committee. A manual for annual summit volunteers is also envisioned.

The possibility of a French language version of the Hike Ontario website was discussed but due to lack of resources did not move forward this year. This is considered important as Ontario has more than 1.2 million citizens that speak French as a first or second language.

At the request of the executive, the committee drafted a fundraising strategy. The strategy was presented to the executive but this appeared to overshoot the expectations of the executive and consequently it was not adopted.

The committee responded to a request from Avon Trail to review a maintenance crew waiver form; Bill and Brendan provided feedback for the response and the response was acknowledged.

The committee chair took on responsibility for the Hike Ontario webmail. This provided an opportunity to see how the webmail functions and help the executive determine the weaknesses in the current system.

A letter supporting the position of the Bruce Trail Conservancy to have an environmental assessment conducted with respect to the Melancthon Quarry was written, approved, signed and sent by the president to Premier McGuinty.

Finally, the committee presented an initiative to hold an orientation retreat for the incoming Hike Ontario executive. The Hike Ontario executive approved the initiative in principle. The first retreat will take place in Elliot Lake following the 2011 annual summit.

Public Education Committee

Submitted by Victoria Arshad

A number of people are responsible for keeping Public Education working to promote hiking across the province. Ron Scanlan has drafted press releases and helped to promote our Summit. He has also been a vital link in directing our e-mails from our website inquiries to the person who can respond best. We have had several members of the executive investigating acquiring better website service and we are close to making a change in our service provider.

Luis Costa has provided executive oversight for the website, updating and channelling postings to our volunteer webmaster Kourtney Partington. Luis is also assisting Tom Friesen in coordinating the Hike Ontario Summit. The Volunteer Awards will be passed out to three deserving nominees from our clubs: Alan Day from the Courier du Bois club of the Voyageur Trail, Pat Aplevich from the Grand Valley Trails Association and Elizabeth Mason from the Rideau Trail Association are our deserving winners. We will also be honouring David Francis as the Virginia Johnson Award for service to Hike Ontario at our Summit.

Angela Liu is concluding her duties as secretary by again producing this Annual Report which is available in print and will be posted on the website.

Thanks to our clubs for their submissions for Ontario Hiking Week. We are excited to plan linking our clubs to exposure to the public through the CBC provincial weekend radio program "Fresh Air".

Terri LeRoux and Tom Friesen assisted by producing Ambassador discs which I was able to pass out to the public at conference events.

We continue to have copies of the "Manual of Best Practices to Encourage Trail Use by Hikers and Walkers in Ontario" and are eager to get these into the hands of trail enthusiasts.

We were able to partner with T.D. Friends of the Environment to offer courses to teachers in the use the Young Hiker manual.

Planning and Development Committee

Submitted by Brendan Zamojc

Completed Items:

Go To Meeting

Go To Meeting has successfully been implemented and is in use by the executive and is available for club use upon request. 7

Insurance

Insurance was a big topic this year, and with excellent outcome. Hike Ontario procured insurance at a significantly reduced rate from those of years past. For larger clubs the savings were not as apparent as they were for smaller clubs, this has resulted in greater flexibility concerning budgets for those smaller clubs. It is expected that the insurance rates for next year will be along the same lines as they were this year.

In conjunction with the insurance initiative and with the President of Hike Ontario, Bill Wilson, a current and updated Risk Management document has been created. Under the purview of Planning & Development a Risk Management program has also been created in order to help clubs become well informed regarding matter of both insurance as well as understanding clearly the suggestions outlined in the Risk Management Document.

Action Items:

Application Based Trail Guides

The Iphone mock-up of the application was extremely well received by the board and has been approved for grant application processing. At this time, the Ministry for Health Promotion does not have any grant applications open, with expected openings in the fall. Other possible grants are being researched in order to move this project forward.

Back Burner Items:

Hike Ontario Identification

A big step in this initiative was taken this year by David Francis in creating identification lanyards for registered Hike Leader Instructors. This initiative is still active for executive and committee members as well as board members.

Conclusion:

The Hike Ontario Planning & Development committee has made many significant improvements and many more are on the way.

SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ontario Trails Council Report

Submitted by Terri LeRoux

As Hike Ontario's representative to the Ontario Trails Council from June 2009 – June 2011, I both enjoyed and valued the opportunity to represent the interests of the hiking and walking trail organizations of Ontario. I strongly value and respect the role that OTC plays as an umbrella organization for trail associations of all types and believe that it is essential that Hike Ontario maintain an active role with OTC so that the views of pedestrian trail users are adequately represented.

The Ontario Trails Council (OTC) - Conseil des Sentiers de l'Ontario – is a charity that promotes the development, preservation, management and use of recreational trails in Ontario. The OTC is governed by a Board of 12 Volunteer Directors. These individuals represent excellence in trail leadership from their respective groups, professions, ngo's and trail management organizations. Many hold directorships at the regional, national and international level. The Board is supported by Patrick Connor, the full time Executive Director.

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

OTC as a Provincial Advocate

Although virtually everyone agrees that trails bring us numerous health, recreational, environmental and economic benefits, we still require an advocacy role to ensure that our perspective is heard, especially at various levels of government.

In today's society, there are many competing priorities for land use and access rights. The Ontario Trails Council brings credibility and recognition to trail issues and speaks with a united voice where advocacy is required. One of the primary areas where the OTC has had real influence in in that of land management issues.

OTC continues to work with the Ministry of Health Promotion to ensure that the goals of the Ontario Trails Strategy are realized.

Overview of the Trailhead Ontario Annual Conference, April 18-21, 2011

Conference Segment, April 18 & 19: Meetings were held April 18 and 19 at the [Niagara Crowne Plaza Fallsview Hotel](#). Attendees learned about new trail projects, leading edge trail building techniques, issues with Niagara Regional Trail Development, Active Transportation, renewal of

the master plan process and participated in an improvised National Roundtable on Provincial Initiatives.

Trailbuilding Segment, April 20 & 21: With the support of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, and Sustainable Trails, attendees spent two days building a trail legacy project on the grounds of the NPCA.

New OTC Program: Trail Education

The OTC has developed a trails education curriculum as an umbrella program for Ontario's local, regional and provincial trails and trail systems. There are 14 specific curriculum areas that are covered in the program content. In 2011, the OTC was successful in receiving a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to hire a facilitator and implement the program.

I would like to thank Hike Ontario for allowing me the opportunity to represent their interests on the OTC Board. It was a wonderful learning experience.

Hike Canada En Marche

Submitted by Brendan Zamojc

HIKE CANADA! Hike Canada on 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.

- Hike Canada Website

One of the most difficult tasks facing Hike Canada and its representatives across the country is maintaining communication lines. As part of building Hike Canada into the same type of hiking resource to the provincial associations as Hike Ontario is for the regional clubs, Hike Canada is exploring the use of social media as a way to reach out to both provincial associations as well as the public at large. Youth is a huge focus of this endeavour.

On the trail side of things, Provincial Associations across the country have been making huge steps towards the completion of the National Pedestrian Trail, with large tracks of trail being linked together in BC for example.

Hike Canada continues to be a worthwhile endeavour and will continue to be so in the near and far future.

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

Submitted by Fred Witvoet

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 21st annual walk this year.

We held our annual 4 day walk at the Royal Botanical Gardens 4 consecutive days June 13 to 16 inclusive. We had about 300 participants and they walked either 5,10 or 15 km daily. In order to receive a medal they must participate at least 3 days and walk a minimum of 20 km for those days. Weather was awesome and the participants had a great time. We had no accidents again

and also the food after was enjoyable. We are not for profit and we essentially broke even again.

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

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 an *Access and Activity* grant from Mountain Equipment Co-op, support from a Trillium Grant, The Canadian Wildlife Federation and a ELJB grant we are pursuing debt reduction and program expansion.

We are currently developing a high quality map which shows the non motorized uses of our trail and the significant environmental features that are contained here. 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 expect this to 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, a foot path trail style along 110 kms of rural countryside between the Thames Valley Trail and the Grand Valley Trail, starts in the town of St Marys along the Thames River. Our Trail Association provides hikes for the membership as well as maintains the 110 kms of Trail. Our members include hike leaders, providing devoted service to hikers of all abilities on various days of the week and weekend; and our Trail Monitors and Maintenance members, our front line workers, making our hiking enterprise possible by enabling the trail to remain open. With the very warm dry summer, it is easy to forget that we had an usually wet and windy spring this year. The combination of wet ground and high winds took

it toll on many parts of our Trail. Our metal blaze replacement program continues as we move to a more conservation minded group. The Trail Audit and GPS work completed in 2010, is resulting in work continuing towards a new guidebook.

We received funding for two bridges this year. A replacement 24ft bridge with the funding supplied by the Thames Valley Trail, and a new 24ft bridge funded by the employees of Union Gas. Our outreach program continues with networking ongoing with other community groups including Hike Ontario.

Bayfield River Valley Trail

Submitted by Dave Gillians

The following is a 2011 update on ***The Bayfield River Valley Trail Association (BRVTA)***:

- ✓ The **BRVTA** currently has 4 walking trails :
 - **Sawmill Loop**: The 2 Km Sawmill Road on the north shore of the Bayfield River which was the original pioneer road to Goderich.
 - **Woodland Loop**: The 5 Km circular walk that begins at Clan Gregor Square in the heart of the Village and meanders past many interesting historic buildings until it dips into the woods for 4 Km. This varied and scenic path is beautiful in all seasons.
 - **Heritage Loop**: 2 km ..following several of the heritage streets in the village of Bayfield.
 - **Varna Nature Trails...Mavis's Trail and the Taylor Trail**, almost 4 km of trails provide a wonderful scenic walk to the Bayfield River.

- ✓ **Thanks to our many supporters, volunteers** and those that have contributed financially to make the trails a reality.

- ✓ **Approximately 1500 volunteer hours** have been invested in constructing bridges, boardwalks, fences and clearing brush this year. **Rob Milligan, owner of West Coast Property Care** is generously donating his time and equipment to keep the meadows on the Varna Nature Trails cut

- ✓ A special thanks must be made to **Dick Peever and his crew of construction professionals from Goderich** who in a driving rain storm, donated their time, expertise, equipment, specialized 'Ramjack' bridge supports for our major bridge project on the Varna Nature Trails

- ✓ We would also like to thank our **private landowner partners** for their continued support.

- ✓ **The Stanley Millenium fund contributed \$1700 to help defray the construction costs of the Varna Nature Trails.**

- ✓ We would also like to thank the **Bayfield Lions Club, the Bayfield Optimist Club, the Municipality of Bluewater** and the **Ausable Bayfield Conservation Foundation** for their financial support and assistance.

- ✓ We are a proud supporter of the **Bayfield Tree Project** which has been established as a committee of the BRVTA. This spring, 28 Sunset Red Maples and Paul's Scarlett Hawthorne trees were planted

on Louisa Street and this fall, depending on how much money is raised, many more will be planted on Bayfield Terrace and Clan Gregor Square.

- ✓ In 2010 sponsored the **Bayfield Terry Fox Run** and raised over **\$3,000 for the Terry Fox Foundation. Over \$5,000 has been raised for Terry Fox by the BRVTA!!**
- ✓ On June 2, at the Bayfield Town hall, we hosted the **award winning documentary, 'Waterlife'**, in partnership with the Healthy Headwaters Wetlands Initiative and the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority.
- ✓ On June 18th, members hosted a fund raising walk and picnic for the local Girl Guide troop.
- ✓ In July, we led a hike on the Woodland Trail by a group of walkers who had tackled the El Camino Trails in Spain and France. They came from all over Southwestern Ontario
- ✓ Two more BRVTA members took the Hike Ontario “ **Hike Leaders Certification Course**”.
- ✓ During the winter months, **volunteer program leaders** hosted group community walks.
- ✓ We would like to thank **The Ross Firm** in Goderich for legal work and guidance this past year

IN THE COMING MONTHS

- ✓ In September, the BRVTA will sponsor **the Bayfield Terry Fox Run.**
- ✓ On October 1, 2011, we will be hosting a cross country run on the combined Heritage and Woodland Trail during the **FESTIVAL OF FITNESS AND ART IN BAYFIELD (FFAB)** in support of the Goderich Hospital's fundraising drive to purchase a **Digital Mammography Machine.**
- ✓ Trail work crews will be completing the construction of a 60 foot bridge across a ravine on the Mavis' Trail in Varna. **Our largest project yet!**
- ✓ We have reserved the Bayfield Town Hall for the Super Bowl as a fundraiser for the Trails

Bighead River Heritage Association (Trout Hollow Trail)

Submitted by Ron Knight

We manage the Trout Hollow Trail in Meaford, on Georgian Bay. The trail is located on the Bighead River which is named after Chief Bighead of the Pottawatami tribe of First Nations people, or so the story goes. Apparently he has signed several treaties so it must be true. The past year has been good for us in that there has been a marked increase in trail users and our membership is now up to 60 with a growing interest from the community. We had a visiting group of 20 college kids volunteer to do trail work so we put them to work building bridges and boardwalks which has made for better trails through creeks and marshes. As always, we are appreciative of the support we get from Hike Ontario regarding training and trail management.

Bruce Trail Conservancy

Submitted by Ron Scanlon

Land Acquisition

This year ten properties, valued at \$1.6 million, were acquired. Diverse habitats including wetlands, alvars, shoreline, cedar bush, river valley, meadow, and lush hardwood forest are now permanently protected.

A highlight in 2011 was the protection of Malcolm Bluff Shores. At 281 acres the property is already sizeable. However, adding to it the neighbouring parcel acquired last year, and the upcoming neighbouring parcel to be acquired in March 2012, all in partnership with Ontario Nature, the result will be more than 1,000 acres of continuous, uninterrupted woodland and natural space. This may well be the last large tract of contiguous and uninterrupted forest habitat in Southern Ontario.

Trail Development and Maintenance

During the 2010-2011 fiscal year, 28 individual Trail reroutes were completed. As part of these Trail reroutes, our volunteers blazed a total of 26 km of main Trail and 22.5 km of side trails. 3.2 km of the Bruce Trail's Optimum Route were secured through the BTC's Land Securement program.

2010-2011 Bruce Trail Statistics

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Total Optimum Route secured	3.2 km	7.6 km	7.3 km
Length of Optimum Route	869 km	866 km	861 km
Secured Optimum Route on BTC and public land	417 km	406 km	388 km
Percent of Trail secure	48%	46.8%	45.0%
Percent of Trail at risk	52%	53.2%	55.0%

Membership

Following an incredible year of membership growth in 2009-2010, overall membership in the BTC decreased in 2010-2011 by 4.1 percent to 8,502 memberships. Membership numbers have been cycling between years of growth and loss, but the overall trend is a slowly growing membership. Successes this past year include:

- Improving communications through our electronic BTC eNews, Facebook pages and a BTC YouTube Channel;

- Attracting members at Bruce Trail Day (900 visitors) through a booth at the Green Living Show, presentations to community groups, improvements to our website and by providing individual downloadable Bruce Trail maps;
- Offering opportunities to get involved and learn through our third annual photo contest, hiker initiation programs and other initiatives.

Volunteerism

This past year, the number of Bruce Trail volunteers grew to 1,250. These are people giving their time, talent and effort, without pay, to our wonderful organization. In a variety of roles, volunteers have given 123,750 hours of service, which is the equivalent of 63 full time jobs worth over \$3 million in labour costs. Through this extraordinary volunteer effort, many acres of land along the Niagara Escarpment have been secured and stewarded. The Bruce Trail is expertly tended and remains a major attraction for locals and tourists alike. This has improved the ecological health of the Niagara Escarpment.

This past year, volunteers assisted with BTC efforts to protect the sensitive ecology of the Niagara Escarpment through activities such as:

- trail management: routing the Trail around ecologically sensitive areas;
- land stewardship: maintaining BTC properties and reintroducing native species of plants and trees;
- fundraising: raising funds to purchase and secure more Escarpment land;
- leading hikes: enabling others to see and appreciate the beauty of the Niagara Escarpment;
- public events: educating people about the Bruce Trail and the Niagara Escarpment.

Partnerships

A new partnership has been created between the BTC and the Jeju Olle Foundation. The Jeju Olle is a series of walking routes on Jeju Island, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, 130 km off the southwest coast of Korea.

As a result of this partnership a friendship trail has been created on both trails. The BTC/Jeju Olle friendship trail was unveiled on September 10, and is located in the Caledon Hills section of the Bruce Trail in the beautiful Hockley Valley.

A second partnership is being developed with the Cotswold Way National Trail located in England.

Durham Outdoors Club

Submitted by Diane Crooks

- Km's of trail: **0**
- # of members : 123 as of Sept 1, 2011.
of current board members and current vacancies: **SEVEN ON EXECUTIVE**
(Note: there are also six 'Event Coordinators')

The club produces a newsletter 4 times as an events calendar and to share items of interest with our members as well as hosting a website: www.DURHAMOUTDOORSCLUB.CA which has a list of upcoming events, event release forms for event leaders to print and have participants sign and pictures from club events.

Monthly Club Meetings

The club holds regular meetings on the last Tuesday of the month except for December and July when no meetings are held. Our meetings usually consist of advising our members of any correspondence, issues that affect the members, treasurers update, members reports on club activities in which they have participated and a guest speaker (when available) on an outdoor activity related subject. This year we have had Kevin Callan "Lost Canoe Routes", Murray Skan & Mary Perkins "Backpacking Basics", Roy Crooks "Biking in Quebec", Robb Duncan " Native Trees found on local Hikes", Brenda Lauzon "Biking in Thailand, Murray Skan " Backpacking the Lake Superior Coastal Trail". All meetings are open to anyone to attend.

Hiking

The club has run hikes in all months this year. Most hikes are 2 to 3 hours in length covering from 8km to 15km. We have had hikes in Durham Forest, Ganaraska Forest, Rouge Valley, Seaton Trail, Orono Forest, Scarborough Bluffs. We also join in on ORTA Hikes and Hikes lead by the Halton Club.

The club has just sponsored a Certified Hike Leader Training course instructed by Hike Ontario Instructor David Francis in which 18 club members became Certified Hike Leaders.

Club members have been on 2 Backpacking Trips this year. One into Algonquin Park, the other to the Lake Superior Coastal Trail. We have a small number of Backpackers in the club.

Wednesday Night Walks

The club has held a Nosey Neighbour Walk almost every Wednesday from Spring to late Fall. Each is a fairly local walk lasting from 1.5 to 2 hours at a moderate pace. These are usually quite well attended with 5 to 20 participants per walk.

Tuesday Evening Bike Rides

From May to October we hold weekly Bike Rides. Most follow sections of the Waterfront Trail from Port Hope to Toronto. The rides are usually about 2 hours in length at a moderate pace.

Canoeing & Kayaking

We run a small number of day paddles as well as 6 weekend canoe trips to lakes within a three hour radius of Oshawa. We had a group of 3 canoes circumnavigate Killarney Park this summer. We have a growing number of members who have taken up Kayaking over the summer.

Urban Events

Club members have organized trips to Mariposa Folk Festival, 4th Line Theatre in Millbrook, Musicfest in Peterborough, Trip to Toronto to see "The Railway Children", and participated in the Carden Nature Festival.

Elgin Hiking Trail Club

Submitted by Brian Wilsdon

The Elgin Hiking Trail Club manages the 41 km Elgin Trail from Port Stanley north to Southdel Bourne, where it connects to the Thames Valley Trail. We had a fairly good variety of winter hikes, including a well attended moonlight hike around Dalewood Lake in St. Thomas in January. The annual meeting was held April 7 at St. James Presbyterian Church, with a guest speaker Keith Malcolm who spoke on the migration of the Tundra Swans. We were pleased to add four new members to the executive, including Bill Clifford as our Hike Ontario representative. Membership was standardized at \$20, to fall due every April. We are in the process of reviewing the numbers, as we are naturally down to about 120.

Two kms of the Elgin Hiking Trail, from John Wise Line north to Southdale Road were closed this spring due to a new eagle's nest too close to the trail. It was reopened in July. Only one group of end-to-end hikers were affected and they took an alternative route by road on the other side of Kettle Creek valley.

The club organized a Go To Blazes day on April 25. In spite of the wet conditions, 15 club members and 10 Army Cadets participated. As well as general light maintenance, stairs were built on the south side of a wet slope on a ravine just north of Southdale Road, and a makeshift reroute was made a kilometre north of that where the trail had been washed into Kettle Creek. Both have held up since then, but need a bit more work. This past wet spring, and humid summer were not helpful to maintenance, or hiking on the rugged Elgin Trail. With some more cleaning up over the next couple of weeks we expect to get the trail in good shape for fall hiking.

A four hike end-to-end will start on Sunday afternoon, October 2.

The annual Candlelit Christmas Spirit Walk at Springwater will be held on Saturday, December 3. Tours run from 6 – 8:00 p.m. Usually we have 30 volunteers, and seven groups of entertainers attracting an average of 600 people a year taking in this event.

We will have our second annual Christmas party at the Sunset Grill on Saturday afternoon of December 10.

Visit our website at www.elginhikingtrailclub.org.

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.

2011 was a good year for Project B.O.O.T. (Benches on our Trailway) which was launched in 2009 in conjunction with the Belwood, Elora, Fergus, Marsville, Hillsburgh, and Erin LIONS clubs. This year we installed a total of 8 benches on the Trailway. Project B.O.O.T was developed to install 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 13 benches installed by the LIONS clubs. See www.trailway.org for more details.

This year "Hike the Trail" series included three evening hikes starting at 9PM. These hikes are held with the support of "in motion" and the township of Centre Wellington. Some hikes started at the Gerrie Road Trailhead as in previous years and two fall hikes started at the Shand Dam park. These hikes included a tour of the Dam and explanation of how the dam functions and a discussion on the hydro electric power it generates. The Gerrie road route took hikers on the Elora Cataract Trailway and several adjacent trails. Our Oct 2nd "Fall Harvest" hike, was timed to take advantage of "Ontario Hiking Week".

We continued to plant trees along the Trailway as part of our 5 year plan. This year we also installed a portable washroom in the Beatty Line Trailhead parking lot. Over the years we've had many requests from trail users for a washroom. This washroom was in place from Mid May to Mid October. Since there was no damage done to the unit during the season, we will be reviewing this winter to see if we continue and or expand this program.

One challenge facing the trail is the development of the Wellington Place/ Trask Land in Aboyne (Between Fergus and Elora). One of the proposed plans has a major road going across the trail. ECTA has been working with other groups and the township to recommend several alternatives.

The 2011 AGM was held on Sunday May 15th at the Elora Centre for the Arts. Our Guest speaker this year was Eric Baldin – "Senior Conservation Lands Planner" for the Credit Valley Conservation. Eric gave an interesting overview of the CVCs approach and reasoning for land acquisition and then highlighted two potential properly in the Hillsburgh area that would good acquisitions. It was followed by a lively Q&A.

Friends of the Trail

Submitted by Bill Gray

Email: friendsofthetrail@yahoo.com

Website: www.friendsofthetrail.ca

Despite a late start due to the cold and wet spring weather, brushing grading and application of base materials was completed on a one kilometre section of trail, Limestone finish materials will be applied later this year to bring this new section up to the same standards as the rest of the completed trail. This leaves us with one kilometre of trail remaining to complete the Lower Trent Trail.

This year our Station Park project moved from vision to conception thanks to the Trillium Grant we received in November 2010. Heartland Environmental Architects were commissioned to evaluate the current park site and to prepare a conceptual plan, drawings and signage for the park development. The first phase will be completed in October and in addition to providing a gathering place for the community it will also greatly enhance handicapped access to the Trail. The wooden bridge decking over Cold Creek was replaced with 40 meters of steel, Tread Safe, decking which has enhanced safety and substantially reduced the required maintenance.

A total of 3000 two year old hardwood and softwood seedlings and shrubs have now been planted on the section of the trail which was disturbed by the water line installation from Frankford to Batawa. This huge trail rehabilitation task could not have been accomplished without the enthusiastic help of dozens of volunteers of all ages who participated. This Community Tree Planting Project was a partnership between the City of Quinte West, the Batawa Development Corporation and the Friends of the Trail Inc.

We were pleased to be selected as one of the recipients of the Union Gas Centennial Community Grants. Our grant application was entered under the Environmental Education, Conservation or Research Category and will allow us to continue to conserve and develop the trail as a natural green space and to restore the natural habitats along the trail. Part of the grant will be also used to construct ecological gardens at Station Park.

Our 5th Annual Charity Golf Tournament was held on June 12th and once again we were delighted to welcome McCurdy Chevrolet-Buick-GMC LTD as our major sponsor. The funds raised from this tournament are used entirely for the maintenance of the Lower Trent Trail.

Use of the trail continues to grow and we receive expressions of approval and appreciation daily from the many diverse users. Every day we see walkers, joggers, cyclists, mothers with strollers, people with mobility devices, kids traveling to and from school, dog walkers and dozens of people traveling to the stores and businesses in downtown Frankford.

Our membership too continues to grow steadily as people in the community and visitors to the trail begins to appreciate the beauty and availability of this ribbon of parkland. We would not have been able to build this trail without the hardworking and dedicated efforts of a strong core group of volunteers who remain committed to the vision of the Lower Trent Trail. It is a pleasure to work with them on this exciting legacy project.

Friends of the Seaton Trail

Submitted by Michael Samerelli

The Seaton Trail is located along the West Duffins Creek in Pickering, Ontario. It runs for 12.7 km from 3rd Concession near Brock Road northwest to Highway 7 at Green River. The trail follows historic hunting and fishing routes on the creek, used for centuries by aboriginal people. In pioneer times, the creek and valley became the site of several water powered mills. A former grist mill stills exists at Whitevale.

This year a new trail was added and allowed use signs were installed. We welcomed hikers from the Bruce Trail and the Oakridges Trail and new volunteers are always welcomed as there are planned projects to improve the trail and protect it for appropriate use.

Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association

Submitted by Jeremy Bonnar

Membership

Total membership of the nine clubs that make up the Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association (GHTA) is 505, including 52 life members, which is consistent with previous years.

Activities

Annual Meetings: The GHTA held our Board of Directors Meeting on 18 April 2011 and the GHTA will host our 2011 Annual General Meeting on 29 October 2011 at Regent United Church in Orillia.

OXFAM: In July 2011, the GHTA hosted the OXFAM Trailwalker Challenge for the third year.

Golden Parks Pass for Seniors: The GHTA is championing a petition to have a annual seniors pass to allow access to Federal and Provincial Parks. A similar program in the USA, allows seniors to purchase a \$10 pass which provides free admission to all federal parks.

Landowner Signs: The GHTA will be purchasing 44 landowner signs which will be posted at the trail heads of our privately owned land. The signs will identify that the Ganaraska Trail is

traversing over privately owned land and will include the GHTA web-site address and space for small decals which might indicate other restrictions to the trail.

Hikes and individual Club Activities: The GHTA nine member clubs host numerous guided hikes throughout the year. Hikes are posted in our quarterly newsletter, as well as on our webpage (<http://www.ganaraska-hiking-trail.ca/>)

- **Barrie (33 active members):** Jeff Haglund (Director) – The club is being managed by committee. Couchiching Conservancy has received a Trillium grant to survey the natural features of the forest and the club directors are worried by the appearance of signs in the forest saying “no more development of trails.”
- **Kawartha (64 active members):** Rose Millet (President) – The club continues to grow. They had a good season and held several evenings of travel talks. Rose sits on the forest management board. They are trying to control use of the forest and establishing and marking trails. Kawartha plan to plant trees around the concrete gate blocks to help ‘soften’ them.
- **Mad River (19 active members):** Jeremy Bonnar (President) – Over the past year several members have qualified on the Hike Ontario Hike Leaders course and they are already seeing the benefits of the course with several end-to-end hikes conducted and more planned in the future. A concession road that the club adopted was badly flooded this year and will require a lot of cleanup. Linda Turnbull stepped down as trail director.
- **Midland (38 active members):** Frieda Baldwin (Director) – They had a good season with Saturday and Sunday hikes and snowshoeing. They held several trail maintenance days. Frieda will be leading end-to-ends of two trail sections.
- **Orillia (46 active members):** Marion Brophy (Director) – The club holds hikes every Tuesday night with 15 – 30 hikers and a long or short hike on Saturdays. They hold lots of social events involving food. Everyone seems to be enjoying the activities.
- **Oro-Medonte (37 active members):** Bob Marshall (Past-President) – Wayne Lillico is now President. The club is doing well. The last several years they have held waterfall tours which have proved popular.
- **Pine Ridge (79 active members):** John Kurowski (President) – Membership is still strong. Trail maintenance will require \$400 - \$500 of material. The club provided comment on the Port Hope plan for Active Trails for Transportation. They will and hold group trips to Westport, Newfoundland and Killarny. The club now has an archivist to deal with material donated by Jack Goering.

- **Wasaga (97 active members):** Lois Kowall (Director) – Have 20 – 30 hikers each week plus 8 – 10 in their ‘amblers’ group. Wasaga Beach Recognition Day honoured 3 members for their longtime service.
- **Wilderness (36 active members):** Tom Hall (President) – The club received a \$200 gift certificate from Mountain Equipment Co-op. Two members are working on a GPS survey of the trail. They ran the Wilderness President’s Challenge in June.

Challenges

Vacant Positions: Two executive member positions remain vacant in the GHTA. We are looking for volunteers to fill the duties as Trail Director and Landowners Relations. Anyone that is interested in helping out is encouraged to advise the executive.

Increased Costs: The GHTA is finding it increasingly difficult to operate within existing fiscal constraints. In particular, we are finding it increasingly difficult to offer same-price mailing charges to all our membership, which in turn effects the mailing of membership renewals, guidebooks, newsletters and clothing. The GHTA is also finding it difficult to operate effectively with our numerous partnerships without suffering some fiscal stressors. As a result, the Directors of the GHTA will be presenting to our membership at our Annual General Meeting, a proposal to increase GHTA Annual Membership fees to \$25.00 to cover increasing costs.

Grand Valley Trails Association

Submitted by Charles Whitlock

The GVTA has had another exciting and successful year covering the period 2010/2011. We have a dedicated volunteer membership that upholds our strategic role along the shores of the Grand River by preserving, caring and maintaining a 275-kilometer public footpath through the Grand River Valley. As with other hiking associations we thank the generosity of our trail captains and other volunteers in keeping the spirit of our Association alive. We established the Association in January 1972. We will be celebrating our 40th anniversary next year.

Participation in club outings has been very active. From April 2010 to March 2011 we promoted 150 hikes and events for members and friends to participate in. We congratulate all those leading and completing so many great hikes during the year.

The Grand Valley Trails Association held its annual general meeting on Tuesday, May 10, 2011. A number of board members did step down after serving for a multitude of years. Our President of three years, Georgia Mulholland, did step down from her position but still serves on the board as Past President. Our highest serving board member is Nicholas Dinka. He holds the position of Vice-President. Nicholas has worked with many non-profit organizations, is an avid hiker and is now learning all about our trail from the seasoned veterans. To assist in chairing meetings and keeping all board members on track with their assignments, we have a

volunteered member Robert Taylor as Chair. Robert is a non-voting member. Most board positions are filled.

Fall 2009 saw the installation of a new cairn rock to mark the beginning of the Grand Valley Trail in Port Maitland. A hike to celebrate the cairn rock was planned in May 2011. GVTA organized a hike bus trip to the cairn. This was successfully attended. We did not crack any champagne over the cairn but did visit a pub afterwards.

In November 2009 the GVTA and Upper Grand Trailway (UGT) completed an agreement allowing GVTA access to the UGT. This agreement is key to potentially moving the Grand Valley Trail into the Grand River Watershed, toward Luther Marsh and ever closer to the headwaters of the Grand River. During the 2010-11 year, follow up communication has continued regarding trail routing/development in the UGT/Luther Marsh area. The GVTA board has decided to create a blue side trail to, and along the Upper Grand Trailway while maintaining the GVTA main trail trailhead at the Pinnacle, near Alton. GVTA has also been informed that the Arthur Community Betterment Committee and the Municipality of Wellington North are considering further trails development in the area and GVTA will continue to monitor this situation. Thanks to GVTA director Charles Whitlock and UGT director Alex Vanderwijst for continuing work on this project during the 2010/11 year.

GVTA continues to explore partnership outings with other outdoor clubs in the community. Two major events took place, reflecting corporation amongst local clubs. One event was the annual GVTA and Waterloo Nordic Sports Club, where we all enjoyed a day of cross-country skiing at Highland Nordic near Duntroon, Ontario. 51 people attended. We rented a highway coach for this event.

Another event that I am sure will peak the interest of Hike Ontario is a bus hike that took place on September 11, 2011. In January 2011, under the auspices of our Program Director, Jane Kenyon, we organized an "Events 2011" planning workshop. One of the results from this workshop was to see if the Thames Valley Club, The Guelph Hiking Club, The Grand Valley Trail Association would combine their efforts in organizing a day bus outing. We enthusiastically report that this was a tremendous success as 50 people had registered for this outing. There were 24 participants from the London area alone. This was a showcase event for the GVTA and we hope to repeat a similar event next year.

The GVTA has been selected to host the Hike Ontario Summit for 2012. We are honored to host such an important event. A dedicate team of enthusiasts has already gathered and plans are under way. Our community offers the modern and growing cities of Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo, along with a beautiful countryside. We are proud of our local heritage.

Guelph Hiking Trail Club

Submitted by Mike Curtis

The Club has had a successful year, with our membership climbing to over 230 members, under the leadership of our president, Kathy Somers. This year we are celebrating the 40th anniversary of our Radial Line Trail, a 41 km hiking trail closely following the long abandoned (1931) electric radial line railway which ran from Lambton to Guelph. This abandoned right of way was the impetus for the formation of the Club in 1971. Over the course of the year, we hiked the trail and had a celebration on the 25th of September with dignitaries and some of the original founding members.

Our guidebook of two years needed a reprint and we are currently working on another updated version. This has proved to be very popular in the local community. This year we once again participated in *"Trails Open"* and were the first in the province to hold our event (April 30). This year we featured section one of our Speed River Trail, with 129 participants, many from outside of Guelph.

The Club's children's hikes continue to be very popular with both children and their parents. We have a large base of thirty families with e-contacts and the word is spreading. We hike with the children and parents in all seasons. These hikes (walks) are both for exercise and education. Our twice per month e-reminder of upcoming hikes is well received by members.

We are very appreciative of the lower insurance premium, which Hike Ontario was able to negotiate, as we can now afford more for trail maintenance and development.

This year we anticipate opening a new loop trail along the Eramosa River on part of the former Guelph Reformatory lands.

Humber Valley Heritage Trail Association

Submitted by Jerry Gorman

Membership

Current paid up membership stands at 55. You will note further down this report that we had almost 9500 users on our trail last year.

Recent Developments

- On June 20 several members of HVHTA executive met with TRCA staff and the spokesman for the Caledon Cycling Club to walk a very environmentally sensitive section of our existing trail. In spite of strenuous HVHTA objections, the TRCA is currently proposing it be included in their multi use (cycling) trail plan. We have not yet heard their final decision. (*)
- The Toronto & Region Conservation Authority has finally purchased the 103 H. Cold Creek

ravine property on the east side of Bolton. In a formal committee report the TRCA has recommended 'that members of the HVHTA be consulted on opportunities for extending a pedestrian trail through the property.' This is an objective that HVHTA has been eagerly pursuing for over 3 years.

- The TRCA monitored our Humber River trail from the spring of 2010 ending March 2011, using counters at 8 trail access points. One outcome showed that our main trail head in Bolton had 9441 users. An on line survey was also in place during the same time to establish user satisfaction. One of the main concerns by hikers was over mountain bikes on the trail.

- Another project that I have previously reported, the rebuilding of the historic Sneath Rd. bridge across the Humber River in Bolton for pedestrian use only, is to be completed and ready for use by the end of September. This bridge will connect our existing trail to our proposed new trail development in the aforementioned 103 H. Cold Creek property.

- In June Jerry Gorman delegated the Town of Caledon with a proposal to create a 10 Km. multi use trail route with inter regional potential, which would provide mountain bike enthusiasts with an exciting route over varied terrain while keeping them separate from the Humber Valley Heritage Trail. All members of Council were enthusiastic in their support of this report. Since 3 TRCA properties are tied in with this proposal, Jerry has applied to make this presentation to the TRCA Humber Watershed Alliance committee of which he and our Hike Ontario president Bill Wilson are members.

(the Toronto & Region Conservation Authority controls all the property which the Humber Valley Heritage Trail traverses)*

Huronian Trails & Greenways

Submitted by Frieda Baldwin

Founded in 1992, Huronia Trails and Greenways has for almost 20 years promoted trail building and trail use in Simcoe County. The organization published a map book in 2010 of loop and linear trails. These maps are also available on www.simcoecountytrails.net. Thanks to a grant from the Ministry of Health Promotion and Sports, Huronia Trails and greenways is currently undertaking the following activities:

1. Green Exercise on Trails Program

Plan for and coordinate "green exercise" trail outings for groups affected by mental health and promote the benefits of "green exercise" (exercise in the outdoors) to mental health clients who are suffering from depression, mood disorder, lack of self esteem, anxiety, coping issues with adversity and change, etc. HTG has partnered with the Waypoint Centre for Mental Health in Penetanguishene, with Wendat Community Programs in Midland, and with the Canadian Mental Health Association in Barrie and Orillia, to reach their clients, and include regular trail outings to various trails in Simcoe County as part of their therapy and social program, as well as Nordic Walking classes with poles. The partner organizations provide transportation, support

staff, as well as healthy food (lunch, snack), whereas Huronia Trails and Greenways provides planning for the outings, a certified hike leader, and a certified Urban Poling instructor.

2. Trail User Safety during Hunting Season campaign

Develop and implement an Injury Prevention campaign related to Hunting Safety Awareness for all Trail Users. This shall include information dissemination (website postings, development of a Trail User Safety brochure and distribution of safety awareness on various government and trail user websites. The goal of this campaign is to prevent hunting related injuries while using trails. Trail users and the public in general, are typically unaware of when hunting season starts and ends, and when it is therefore dangerous to use trails in forests, etc. For the average trail user, who are non-hunters, finding hunting season related information on the MNR website and interpreting it, is extremely difficult. Through education and awareness as well as Safety Guidelines, we hope to prevent injury by creating an informational brochure, website page, press releases, etc. and disseminate this information through the Ontario Trails Council, Hike Ontario, etc. Partner organizations in this initiative are the Ministry of Natural Resource, County of Simcoe Forestry Dept, Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority, and the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters. The OFAH is also providing some financial support towards print materials.

3. Social Media Strategy

Develop and implement a social media strategy to promote physical activity on trails to the Under 30 age group. The intent is to develop a strategy to reach young people who use Facebook, Twitter, etc. on a consistent basis and create a following by providing trail related information. One of our volunteers has offered to help with the development of the strategy. We will then require a resource staff to create trail related stories, etc. that can be posted on a regular basis. Those same stories can then also be used as press releases for use in other media (newspaper, radio, etc.)

4. New Loop Trails

Project management and cartography for 5 new loop or urban trail maps. HTG currently has mapped 17 loop trails spread over Simcoe County, however, there is interest and need for more so that local residents have access to loop trails close to their homes, and so they can become more physically active. This project will involve scouting out appropriate properties and routes, suitable for families with young children, GPS the routes, create a cartographic map, and post the map on our website. These additional 5 maps will also be available for the next edition of the HTG map book. The current 17 loop trails are also in need of a "refresh", i.e. make sure the trails are visible, easy to follow using our signage, etc.

Lost River Walks, North Toronto Green Community

Submitted by Shachindra Tripathi

Lost Rivers coordinates guided walks that tell the fascinating story of Toronto's past and present landscapes, people, buried creeks and neighbourhoods. Since 1995 over 20,000 people have participated in Lost River Walks.

Lost River Walks are a great way to:

- *Discover the secret life of water in the city: find out about the amazing human and natural water systems that form our urban life support system*
- *Take a fascinating journey into the history of your neighbourhood*
- *Get connected with your watershed and take action for a restored ecosystem*
- *Enjoy an interesting, relaxing and healthy outing in your neighbourhood*

Lost Rivers is a program of the Toronto Green Community in partnership with Toronto Field Naturalists and many others including Hike Ontario, Evergreen, Riversides, Human River, TRCA Don Council, LEAF, Humber Heritage, Youth for Water, Highland Community Stewardship Program, and others.

Walks:

From October 1st 2010 to August 31th 2011 there were 32 walks with 899 attendees. There were 23 volunteer walk leaders. We held special walks for Heschel School, Temple Emanuel, Thorncliffe Women's Group, The Stop, The Pocket Residents Association, Oakvale Green Community Garden Association, Withrow Farmers Market.

Hike and Help

In October and November 2010 Ed Freeman and Helen Mills led walks for 135 employees of Geosoft and Symantec – kicking off the new Hike and Help Program of the Toronto Green Community.

The program is designed to make it easy for corporate volunteer groups to enjoy and help the environment. Companies interested in adding an environmental focus to a volunteer day or corporate gathering can choose from a number of interesting eco-based hikes, activities and workshops, taking into account a company's interests and timing. Volunteer activities can be undertaken on their own or combined with a Lost River Walk, making for a meaningful and engaging volunteer experience.

Outreach and Education:

- Lost Rivers was featured on Alexandra Cousteau's National Geographic Blue Legacy 2010 Expedition. Video is at:
<http://www.alexandracousteau.org/field/expedition-films/film-urban-watersheds-runoff-renewal>

- Two lectures on Lost Rivers of Toronto were delivered by John Wilson
 - Canadian Perspectives Lecture Series; University of Toronto Senior Alumni Association, Nov. 9, 2010 - approx. 40 attendees.
 - Avenue Club Lecture Series, Feb. 7, 2011 - approx. 30 attendees,
- Helen Mills did presentations for:
 - Nature Month at the ROM, “Mud Creek and the Secret Life of Water in the City” approx. 48 attendees (Youth for Water did a great intro, and Waiyee Sofia and Richard contributed video poster and a large scale map – see below)
 - Toronto Botanic Gardens Milne Garden Club, “Mud Creek and Toronto’s Historic - Ecosystems” – approx. 75 attendees
 - Toronto Region Conservation Authority in Stouffville “Rain Gardens 101” approx. 15 attendees
- Richard Anderson made a Mud Creek video
- Annie MacLeod created a Mud Creek walking tour for the Walk the Don Website of the Toronto Region Conservation Authority. The final version will be posted in the next few months at: <http://www.trca.on.ca/protect/watersheds/don-river/walk-the-don.dot>
- Mark Mazurak created a Lost Rivers Poster and Postcard
- Sofia Bonnilla created a Diversity Poster for the ROM Event
- Waiyee Chou created a watershed map of Mud Creek for the ROM event:
- Evergreen Brickworks launched the Watershed Wall art installation on Wednesday Dec 1. 2010. Toronto’s rivers are illustrated as downspout pipes placed against a “green wall” feature. Ferruccio Sardella, the artist received advice on Lost Rivers and neglected watercourses from Helen, John and Annie. This is the largest map of Toronto (according to Evergreen press release) and dominates the Welcome Court wall at EBW, promoting “Watershed Consciousness”. John, Madeleine McDowell, Adele Freeman and Helen were invited speakers at the launch.
- Students at Central Tech did an installation featuring Garrison Creek and Taddle Creek
- We answered many requests for information from researchers, filmmakers and students, including:
 - Meeting with Alice Hall of Thames 21 in London England during her research trip to Toronto.
 - Helen and John walked the East Don River with Jennifer Bonnell who is writing a book on the history of the Don River. See <http://walkingthedon.blogspot.com/>
 - Consulting with Youth for Water to develop a new program with Toronto Community Housing: “Catching Rain”
- Other publicity:
 - French Language article: <http://www.lexpress.to/archives/5875/>
 - CPAC Weekend Edition
 - Now Magazine
 - Globe and Mail
 - Canadian Geographic
- The **Human River** Event did not happen in 2010 but is on again for 2011. Check out Michael Cook’s blog from last year: <http://www.vanishingpoint.ca/raising-the-river>

Website: (www.lostrivers.ca):

Developed and launched in 2002 by Peter Hare, the Lost Rivers Website is a virtual tour of the lost rivers which form the main matrix of buried creeks 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, 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.

Lost Rivers did not move into the finalist voting for Aviva funding for the website. Arlene Buehler, TGC volunteer, created a wonderful video and promoted the voting with a number of email trees. We received close to 1,000 votes, but not quite enough. Fundraising efforts continue.

Research has been done and we are ready to put up information on the Lost Creeks of Ashbridges Bay and Lavender Creek)

People:

Lost Rivers Committee:

Helen Mills, John Wilson, Emily Alfred, Shachindra Tripathi, Justyna Braithwaite, Richard Anderson, Georgia Ydreos, Ian Wheal, Annie Macleod, Paula Messina, Wai Yee Chou, Ping Ya Lee, Madeleine McDowell

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 listserve)
- 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

Lucan Area Trails Association

Submitted by Bruce Lamb

Start of 2011

At the start of the year, we had 0.5 km of trails which were built last year, which connected to approximately 3 km of trails already in existence and maintained by a private landowner. This first trail was to allow us to get some experience in how best to build trails, and to gain an appreciation for the resources required and the costs involved.

Trails Built in 2011

This year, we started a new trail ("Martens' Trail") in a valley beside the Little Ausable River, west of Lucan. We have cleared approximately 1.5 km of trail, much of it through dense forest. The trail will be open to non-motorized guests and should be "officially" open some time in October.

Financial

The initial funding for this project was provided by the Lucan District Lions Club and we know that they are supportive of the initiative. We are pretty confident that if we request more funds from the Lions that they'll be more than willing to write a cheque to allow us to keep this initiative going.

This year we have spent very little of the roughly \$10,000 we have in the bank, but with the number of volunteers on trail building quite variable (sometimes as low as 1 person showing up), we are looking to sub-contract some of the trail building work to local contractors with the equipment necessary to level some parts of the trail that traverse hills.

Goals for 2012

Our goal for next year is to either build a 1 km connecting trail from the Lucan Memorial Community centre to the entrance of the Martens Trail, or continue building areas of the Martens trail closer to the river (or both).

Maitland Trail Association

Submitted by Mava Holland

Our annual membership is at 137 members - up slightly from last year. Approximately half of these are family memberships.

We have a trail work crew of 12 volunteers and a full slate of Trail Rangers who each patrol a section of our trails and report on conditions to the work crew. The MYA now has 25 certified hike leaders, approximately half who were newly certified this past year.

Our work crews were busy this past year installing steps in a number of areas of the trail, constructing a 5th outhouse, and of course the regular trimming of bushes and the continuing maintenance that is needed to keep the trails in a safe condition. The boardwalks in the Maitland Woods were replaced with wider ones.

Participation at our hikes this year remains about the same. Our Tuesday Trompers group is very active, hiking regularly every Tuesday morning. During the winter months both cross country skiing and snow shoeing events were organized and very well attended. This spring we added a regular series of cycling evenings to our schedule. This year the attendance was disappointing but, with continued publicity and cooler evenings we expect interest to grow.

There are a lot of challenges ahead for the coming year but the enthusiasm of our work crew and hikers will meet and overcome them.

The Maitland Trail Association has been working, in conjunction with members of the public, to create a the edge of the Highway 21 right of way from Goderich to Point Farms Provincial Park, a distance of about 5 km. This project, called the Port to Point trail, has now been set up as a separate organization, The Ministry of Transportation has indicated that the best chance of approval is for the trail to be promoted by the Town of Goderich and the Ashfield Colborne Wawanosh township as part of their Green Transportation plans. The committee is now working on attaining this backing and is being supported by the MTA wholeheartedly
The annual February Candelit walk in Maitland Woods was again a great success with 410 walkers and \$570 in donations.

A very important person and long standing board member of the MTA, Wendy Hoernig, retired this year. She is being missed and we would like to take this opportunity to thank Wendy for her many many years of dedicated work for the Association.

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.

Several interesting hikes have been run in all seasons and weather. Major blowdowns and a washout have created some difficulties for trail use this year. Learn more at:

www.nastawgantrails.com

North Simcoe Rail Trail

Submitted by Frieda Baldwin

This 30 km long railtrail just north west of Barrie is a multi-use trail, that is managed by the North Simcoe Railtrail Inc. board of management. Following major surface upgrades in 2009 and 2010, the organization has maintained the trail by cutting the grass, and spraying for poison ivy. In partnership with the County of Simcoe and the Township of Springwater, the board is looking into rerouting the trail north of Elmvale, and extending it at the south end, to connect it with the recently abandoned Barrie to Collingwood railway.

For a map, got to <http://simcoecountytrails.net/nsrt/map.html>

Oak Ridges Trail Association

Submitted by Stan Butcher

Changes.

To emphasize the moraine-wide extent of our trail system we have renamed it as the **Oak Ridges Moraine Trail**. The name of the association remains unchanged.

The process of reducing the size of our Board and operating as four Regions rather than the previous ten Chapters continues. Two new Directors are making significant contributions, but some long-standing members are looking to stand down.

Development.

1,000 copies of the 5th Edition of our Guidebook, published on January 1st, 2010, are almost sold out. As we prepare to reprint we are surprised at the number of minor changes to the trail route which have occurred in 20 months. In one case we had routed along a rural track only to learn the township records were incorrect and that it is private land; the owners do not want hikers there. Their reticence arises from the fear – probably justified in the location – that any designation as a public trail will attract ATVs and snowmobiles.

A new location for our western terminus at Mono Mills is being finalized – they have constructed a new parking lot where the Bruce Trail crosses 5th Sideroad north of the community. With funding from the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation a Gateway Kiosk is being designed jointly with the Bruce Conservancy and should be installed in a few weeks.

Fund Raising.

Our **Fifth Adventure Relay** on Saturday, June 18th was a great success, thanks to the committee which had meticulously planned the event. 30 teams participated whilst about 100 ORTA Members and friends staffed the 15 checkpoints. The challenge for next year is finding a new principal sponsor.

Future Directions.

Proceeds from the Adventure Relays have left us in a good financial position. We have embarked on some trail and signage improvements, the latter designed to make it easier for public to access the trail system.

Our Membership continues to be stabilized just below 600. People come and people go! It seems some don't feel a need to continue Membership once they've got to know the trails in their locality. Our Annual Meeting and monthly Discovery Nights have been well attended thanks to an attractive and varied program.

Having made it mandatory for Hike Leaders to hold a current First Aid Certificate we've laid on three courses. Three Hike Leaders' meetings during the year were well attended and the number and variety of Group Hikes continues to increase; 17 leaders are offering 74 hikes in the coming quarter. The noticeable increase in the ethnic diversity of participants in our group hikes continues.

Palmerston Trail Association

Submitted by Barbara Burrows

The Palmerston Trail Association is maintaining membership at approximately thirty families. Over the past year we have held one guided trail walk and planted 3,000 trees in conjunction with Wellington County's Green Legacy programme.

Our Spring Frog Walk and Story telling took place on April 15 and we had twenty participants. We're proud to report that we have hundreds of frogs and later this summer we spotted baby turtles just making their way to the creek. We really enjoy the wildlife along White's Junction Trail. Wild turkeys are abundant there too.

In April, with wet, cold weather all week, we organized the planting of 3,000 trees. Staff from the Green Legacy were on site and several bus loads of students were brought in to help. Although the weather was unpleasant, the job got done. In a few years we will see wildlife in the trees and bushes and we will enjoy the benefits of a windbreak along the trail.

On October 14, we will host another guided walk - our annual Owl Prowl. We will have owl information and legends for all to hear. This evening event goes on rain or moonshine.

The gates we installed last year help to clearly define the access points to the trail. We have some brochures to hand out and we are included in the guide book Wellington Walks provided by the County of Wellington.

Since we own the trail property we have ongoing maintenance issues and need the support of all our members to keep the trail safe. We are fortunate to have dedicated workers on our team and hope to focus on the rail history of our trail in the near future.

Rideau Trail Association

Submitted by Robert Groves

This year the Rideau Trail Association is celebrating the 40th anniversary of the opening of it's 387 km. long foot-path from Kingston to Ottawa. The Rideau Trail follows as closely as possible the route of the Rideau Canal waterway, whose own 175th Anniversary was celebrated in 2007. Douglas Knapp, a Kingston hiker, hatched and promoted the idea of a trail similar to the Bruce Trail that had been completed four years earlier (1967). To celebrate our 40th Anniversary, members of the RTA and their guests are carrying the "President's Walking Stick", the symbol of office, along the entire length of the Trail, in a sort of a relay, which began in Kingston on April 2. Passing from hand to hand, the Stick is making its way along the Trail until it arrives at the new Ottawa Trail Head (at the base of the Ottawa Locks of the Rideau Canal) in a Grande Finale on November 5, 2011 when the new Trail head also will be unveiled. Each participant to "Carry the Stick" receives a special commemorative badge and the opportunity to purchase a tee-shirt emblazoned with "I carried the Stick". Participation has been excellent.

At the AGM in June Ron Hunt (past president) and Peter Hawkins (president) retired, after longstanding faithful service in many roles on the board. Incoming president, Robert Groves, Vice-president Louise Osborn, Membership director, Sheila Menard, and Treasurer, Joy Webster, are planning to embrace the task of strategic planning with the board for the next decade of the RTA as it approaches the it's Golden Anniversary in 2021.

Rouge Park Trail Club

Submitted by Diana Smyth

Rouge Park's public guided walk program is flourishing, with 25 volunteer leaders along with our Trail Coordinator Diana Smyth, leading on average 29 walks a month on the Park's Toronto trails. 3 new leaders hit the trail in September to bring our leader count to 28.

In 2010, Rouge Park's guided walks:

1. Welcomed over 1600 walkers, accounting for repeat and first time walkers
2. Covered nearly 1000kms, based on an average of 5kms per walk
3. Held 194 walks

In 2011, we have:

1. Welcomed over 900 walkers, accounting for repeat and first time walkers
2. Covered over 850 kms, based on an average of 4kms per walk
3. Held 216 walks – we added Sundays as of September 2010

Rouge Park's guided walks, while targeting natural and cultural heritage interpretation, also have a focus on trail etiquette, best practices and safety.

And as the seasons change, commentary from our walk leaders and information from new trail ambassadors will help walkers learn how to transition no matter what time of year. We hope this will enable more people to embrace outdoor walking as a regular part of their week, and also to entice visitors to see the Park's beauty year-round.

We are fortunate to have a partnership with Ontario Power Generation (OPG), as part of their Biodiversity community outreach program, and support from Mountain Equipment Co-op. With this support, we can enhance and expand the guided walks program and introduce our new trail ambassadors. Training is underway with a great group of volunteers to develop this new program and in return give them a rewarding volunteer experience in our truly unique urban ecological park.

Walk leaders take groups of visitors on planned walks on Rouge Park's trails. They build outings reflecting the time of year or a level of activity, or other theme, to attract different visitors to come out. Each walk has its own character.

Ambassadors use Rouge Park's trails and trail head/parking areas as places to engage and welcome visitors who are coming as 'self-guided' walkers. They help those visitors get acquainted with the Park, even if they come often, as there is always something to update, i.e. trail conditions, wildlife sightings.

Both volunteers aim to imbue in Rouge Park visitors a sense of pride and care of the Park through positive words and actions, and being a role model of stewardship. This includes explaining to self-guided and guided walkers the Park's code of conduct, and responding accordingly to actions that are not in keeping with that code, i.e. dogs off leash, walking off trail. We also train all our volunteers toward Standard Hike Leader certification, whether they are ambassadors or leaders.

Street To Trail Association

Submitted by Paul Mackle

Street to Trail is a non-profit organization that helps people living on the streets of Toronto rediscover their inner sense of worth using the healing power of the natural world. Street to Trail organizes wilderness hikes and other outdoor excursions including canoe trips that help homeless people experience the beauty and therapeutic calmness of nature.

Here at Street to Trail, we believe that by getting troubled people away from the city to participate in a wilderness trip they can benefit positively by increasing their self-confidence, enjoying a positive environment to support overcome addictions, find new, meaningful relationships and rediscovering lost feelings of peace and hope. Learn more about Street to Trail at <http://www.street-to-trail.com/index.html>

Thames Valley Trail Association

Submitted by Maureen McGauley

- Yearly average membership remains at 350.
- Trail maintenance – hundreds of people-hours in 2011, including blazing, inspecting and reporting, brush cutter training, repairing or building bridges and boardwalks, installing steps, clearing trail have left our trail in the best shape it has been in recent memory. A system of trail captains and trail maintenance leaders is working well under the leadership of Alan Day and Dave Kirkpatrick
- Currently we have secured storage facilities for our PR display equipment and organizing archival material.
- We are transitioning to a new website with updated format and information.
- We have a new webmaster, newsletter editor and are still seeking a president and vice-president.
- We are hoping to create an inventory and sign-out system for our train maintenance equipment.
- Some members are currently voluntarily receiving our newsletter electronically.
- We had over 50 participants at our annual picnic.
- Our PR team participated in several community events in 2011 including the creation of a new trail and a tree planting ceremony for the Celebration Forest in partnership with Reforest London.
- An end-to-end hike involved members from other Trail Associations from April to July.
- A certified Hike Leader course was offered in June with 8 people in total. We recertified 31 Hike Leaders who had taken training and been offering hikes for more than 5 years.
- Risk Management Policy is being developed and was discussed at several board meetings

- Trail Guides continue to sell well in local business locations
- We donated the cost for the materials of a 24 foot bridge to a neighbouring trail association and have plans to assist the Maitland Trail with their clean up and reconstruction after the August 20 tornado.

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. Our hiking and other events can be found at: <http://www.tbha.ca/downloads/Summer2011.pdf>

Voyageur Trail Association

Submitted by Carole Blaquiere

The Voyageur Trail Association has had a busy summer with hikes, events, trail development and training. There have been a minimum of 3 hikes per week in the active Coureurs des Bois Outdoors Club in the Elliot Lake area and weekly hikes in the Saulteaux area. Special events included hikes in The Chutes Provincial Park, Victoria Falls, Mt McBean, Cup & Saucer on Manitoulin Island, Lake Superior Provincial Park, and Echo Bay. Some members took out their canoes and kayaks to paddle on the Goulais River and other popular spots.

The Saulteaux Club has recently completed a new two kilometre loop through Hiawatha and Kinsmen Parks in Sault Ste. Marie. This new trail follows Crystal Creek around the beautiful Crystal Falls to the 30 year old CIF Anniversary red pine plantation. It then traverse the varied forests of MockingBird Hill Farm, a working heritage farm, before connecting back to the main trail. There has also been an interest in developing a loop trail in the Iron Bridge/Melwel Lodge section.

Eighteen hardy souls signed up for hike leader training in Elliot Lake which has proven successful in recruiting trained hike leaders. The club members assisted in preparation of the new Porridge Lake Exercise Trail (part of the PPUoT Initiative by Friends of Algoma East) which opened in June.

Of course, the Coureurs des Bois members have heavily involved in preparation of Hike Ontario Summit 2011.

The Saulteaux Club is concerned that the requirement that hike leaders be certified, for insurance purposes, is going to be difficult (financially) to achieve. The club can probably only

certify a few each year, and that may have a detrimental affect on our number of outings. Likewise, some of our long-time leaders, who may only lead one outing a year, may be offended by being asked to take a leadership course. There is also a feeling that leaders will not want to spend much time renewing their certification; perhaps an on-line quiz would suffice, rather than taking the course again after a couple of years. Club members will be bringing this up at the Hike Ontario Summit.

The Sauteaux Club has purchased some signs with money from the Trans Canada Trail. One has been installed on the waterfront at the Ontario Tourism building, one will be installed shortly at Hiawatha, and a third is being considered for the existing map at Crimson Ridge Golf Course.

Membership remains static, but some new faces have been spotted recently after they visited our website, which is currently being re-developed. Steve Dominy is seeking response to our on-line calendar. Unless all the clubs use it, it will not be the tool we hoped it might be. Rather than having access to a consolidated event planner, interested parties would have to visit each club's page to find out what events are upcoming.

VIRGINIA JOHNSON AWARD

David Francis is the deserving winner of the Virginia Johnson Award for 2010 - 2011. This award is dedicated to the memory of Virginia Johnson, a wonderful volunteer who showed dedication and proficiency in making Hike Ontario an effective organization.

David is a worthy recipient because he demonstrates these characteristics. David is a Past President of Hike Ontario who remained on the board as the Chair of the Certification Committee. He has created the Certified Hike Leader Manual, expanded the training of more instructors to cover the province and created processes and documents to improve the Certification process. David shows passion and competence for Hike Leader training and will continue to give leadership as a Hike Leader trainer and assist us as we transition to update our system of Hike Leader Training.

The executive of Hike Ontario is pleased to congratulate David Francis, the 2010 – 2011 winner of the Virginia Johnson Award.

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 2010-2011 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS ARE:

Pat Aplevich, Grand Valley Trails Association

Pat has been involved with the GVTA for 6 years. She is a hiker who goes out regularly with a group of friends enjoying the city trails. At one time she was a trail captain. Most of us know her for her work in the past four years as the Managing Editor for Trail Markings. Pat is the volunteer who collects and organizes the articles for the newsletter. She makes sure that items are submitted on time and in the absence of a Publications Director she attends board meetings prior to the newsletter deadline so that she can include board related items in each issue. During her four years she has helped train and worked with four different Technical Editors.

For the past seven months Pat has chaired the Nominating Committee for the Board of Directors. During this time she talked to a number of members who decided to help the GVTA in volunteer tasks other than as Board members.

Pat reviewed and helped to update several job descriptions. She made an important connection with three community Volunteer Action Centres. It was through these connections that the committee was able to set up several interviews with potential Board of Director members. After the AGM Pat will continue with follow up phone calls or interviews to make sure that the new directors are settling into their volunteer positions and the job is a good fit for them and the GVTA.

This year Pat stepped up to do a much needed job for the GVTA Board of Directors. She did so with determination and professionalism that has resulted in a positive contribution to the GVTA.

In the world of volunteers, at some point, we all hope to be able to “make a difference” for the organization we represent. Pat has made that difference.

Alan Day, Coureurs de Bois Outdoors Club of Elliot Lake

This recommends that Alan Day, Past President of the Coureurs de Bois Outdoors Club of Elliot Lake, Ontario, be considered for a Volunteer of the Year Award at the upcoming Hike Ontario Summit Meeting in Elliot Lake.

Alan is a long-time member of the Coureurs de Bois, filling most of the committee positions in that time. In addition, he is also President of the Voyageur Trail Association, and has membership in the Penokean Hills Field Naturalists, Friends of Algoma East, and Ontario Stewardship Committee.

His accomplishments over the years are many:

- For many years, together with his wife, Di, he helped maintain the canoe routes and portages in the area.
- He was primarily responsible for rerouting the Trans Canada Trail from its original track to the present location through Elliot Lake. This was necessary due to frequent flooding on the original track. He was also responsible for the erection of a Trans Canada Trail Pavilion in Elliot Lake.
- He spent countless hours marking the local “City” trails making it easier for all hikers to navigate them safely.
- He has assisted the Penokeans in trail improvements in the Sheriff Creek sanctuary.
- He was involved in the creation of the Porridge Lake exercise trail.
- He has been heavily involved with the recent People Powered Use of Trails Initiative, particularly in the production of a new map book of the local trails.

- Alan, in addition to all his other accolades, was chair and a founding member of the Elliot Lake Shared Use Trails Committee and was instrumental in forming much of its policy. He is now chair of the Elliot Lake Trails Alliance, a non-profit organisation, a necessity when going after gov't funds. He formed much of its policy also. As far as I'm concerned, he is "our man" at city hall.

Despite failing health, Alan continues to be a valuable and active resource for the Coureurs de Bois and other clubs and is well deserving of this award.

Elizabeth Mason, Rideau Trail Association

I am pleased to recommend that Elizabeth Mason, Chairperson, the Ottawa Club of the RTA, be considered for a Volunteer of the Year Award at the upcoming Hike Ontario Summit Meeting in Elliot Lake.

Elizabeth is a long-time member of the Rideau Trail Association, having joined thirty years ago in 1981. She volunteered on the executive in 1982; became activities coordinator for a year or two and then newsletter editor for a few years; Elizabeth completed her end to end in 1982/1983 and started to lead hikes. She organized some of the first week getaways to Bruce Trail. She had a lower profile in the 1990's but retired in the early 2000's. Elizabeth then volunteered as newsletter editor for two years; chair of Ottawa club for 4th year now; member of the RTA board; researched and produced the brochure 'A walking Tour of Nicholsons Locks' to highlight area of natural and historic interest along the trail. Elizabeth continues to lead hikes.

Each year the Annual General Meeting of the Rideau Trail Association is organized by volunteers from one of the three clubs, Ottawa, Central (Perth), and Kingston. This year, the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Rideau Trail, Elizabeth and a group of volunteers from the Ottawa Club under her leadership ensured that this celebratory AGM was hugely successful.

There are no doubt many more details one could include concerning Elizabeth's accomplishments. She is a tireless, thoughtful, and reflective person whose engagement and investment in the RTA have been quite critical to the longevity and success of the RTA.

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.

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

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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