

# Annual Report

## Hike Ontario



**Get Outside. Get Healthy. Hike.**



Hike Ontario

**Annual Report 2008-2009**

[www.hikeontario.com](http://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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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 2008 –2009**

Tom Friesen	President
Ron Knight	Vice President / Treasurer
Holly Nadalin	Secretary
Terri LeRoux	Ontario Trails Council Representative
Harold Sellers	Ontario Trails Council Representative
David Francis	Hike Canada Representative
Deanna Rando	Hike Canada Representative

### **Standing & Ad-Hoc Committees 2008-2009**

Certification & Awards	David Francis
Communications	Terri LeRoux
Government Relations	Bill Wilson
Fund Development	Terri LeRoux
Insurance	Harold Sellers
Membership / Office	Henry Graupner
Risk Management	John Fortier
Volunteer of the Year	Tom Friesen
Young Hikers Program	Terri LeRoux

### **Board Members – as appointed by our Member Clubs**

Karen Streich, Algoma Highlands Conservancy

Karen LeFrancois Hill, Avon Trail

Roger Lewington, Bayfield River Valley Trail

Ron Knight, Bighead River Heritage Association (Trout Hollow Trail)

Peter Leeney, Bruce Trail Association

Mary Perkins, Durham Outdoors Club

Brian Wilsdon, Elgin Hiking Trail Club

Raymond Soucy, Elora Cataract Trailway Association

Bill Gray, Friends of the Trail Inc (Quinte)

David Beevis, Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association

Ruth Oswald, Grand Valley Trails Association

Mike Curtis, Guelph Hiking Trail Club

Jerry Gorman, Humber Valley Heritage Trail Association

Frieda Baldwin, Huronia Trails & Greenways & North Simcoe Rail Trail

Ron Fletcher, Lost River Walks, North Toronto Green Community

Wendy Hoernig, Maitland Trail Association

Les Wilcox, Nastawgan Trails

Stan Butcher, Oak Ridges Trail Association

Barbara Burrows, Palmerston Trail Association Inc

Ron Hunt, Rideau Trail Association

Paul Mackle, Street To Trail Association

Maureen McGauley, Thames Valley Trail Association

Peter Summers, Thunder Bay Hiking Association

Patrick Capper, Voyageur Trail Association

Peter Van Dyk, 4 Day Evening Walk Committee



## **COMPASS 2010, Our Strategic Plan. Moving Towards COMPASS 2015.**

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

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

In sync with current trends in Ontario such as the Ontario Trails Strategy and Active 2010, COMPASS 2010, provides our organization with a measurable blueprint for action. Our priorities as a provincial alliance of hiking clubs and trail management agencies and the emphasis that we place on our critical objectives may shift over time in response to many factors, both internal to and external from the organization itself. Yet, establishing an agreed-upon course of action is the first step to achieving our goals, individually and collectively. We invite you to work with Hike Ontario to support our efforts.

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

### Serving More People

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

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

### Delivering Service Excellence

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

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

### Strengthening the Hiking & Walking Community

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

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

#### Developing Effective Organizational Systems

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

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

#### Achieving Sustainability

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

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

#### **Currently under development, COMPASS 2015 will be:**

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

## **Presidents Report, Tom Friesen**

I have enjoyed the opportunities to meet members of most of our Hike Ontario clubs and to walk on trails from Ottawa to Lake Huron and from Lakes Erie and Ontario up to Georgian Bay. We have a wonderful diversity of fabulous trails in Ontario. The most unifying feature I note is the hard work and enthusiasm of our members regarding their trails. I have communicated with members regarding trails further north and hope I have a chance to walk on these pathways in the coming year.

I also look forward to this year as a great opportunity to put more Hike Ontario resources and programs into wider use. This year has seen us ratify a new Vision Statement, a Position Statement on the Use of Trails and a Grant Policy. I am confident this will enable us to more fully disseminate "Best Practices", "Young Hikers", "Safe Hikers", "Hike Leadership Certification" and the "Ambassador Program". These programs have all seen use this year. I was thrilled that we recently trained 15 more Safe Hiker Instructors and look forward to these people providing instruction to people across the province. A committee is also nearing completion of the Compass 2015 Strategic Directions Plan which will set out future goals.

I must thank the executive, board members and other volunteers who are striving to make Hike Ontario "the number one support resource for hiking and walking groups and pedestrian trail based users" in our province.

## Advocacy Report

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. In 2009, Committee progress has been made specifically with respect to our Compass 2010 strategic direction *Strengthening the hiking and walking community*.

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### Government Relations Committee Report, Submitted by Bill Wilson

Submitted by Bill Wilson

Crothers Woods (Toronto) Trail Management Strategy: Harold Sellers passed Crothers Woods information on to me from Scott Laver of Toronto Parks Dept for comment on Nov. 1/08. Laver stated that the link to the plan is: <http://www.toronto.ca/trees/pdfs/CrothersWoodsTrailManagementStrategy.pdf> (City of Toronto Forestry website in the 'Ravines' section), and that “the park area is highly populated by mountain bikers (around 85% of the users) however we are doing our best to build and maintain the trails as multi-use.”

While I was not familiar with this park area, I thought it was an excellent opportunity for Hike Ontario to speak its piece for City Park planning in general. I expressed the hope, that while our position may well be not applicable or desirable in the Crothers Woods case, the City might find our views, stated below, useful for other natural area park planning.

Generally Hike Ontario prefers to see some facility in park plans for pedestrian only use. Hike Ontario has, since 1992, held that, “recreational hikers generally prefer a trail just for hikers”. Hike Ontario sees four reasons for its position, as follows:  
First, because liability can be somewhat reduced if uses are separated .

Secondly, we believe that separate trail systems keep open the potential for both bikers and hikers seek to maximize their recreational and other pursuits and to use top class facilities where the element of conflict between users is removed.

Thirdly, is the matter of making available more trails as outdoor education facilities. The wide diversity of natural phenomena viewable along trails in natural areas makes those trails important outdoor education facilities . Outdoor educators are experiencing difficulties in establishing and funding regular outdoor education curricula (as noted in the last two TRCA Humber Watershed Report Cards). . The availability of natural area trails to the public-at-large is , therefore, becoming increasingly important.

Fourthly, pedestrian-only trails can meet the needs of a wider public. Both the very young and elderly find that walking is generally more compatible with their needs for quiet enjoyment and health.

Subsequent to this correspondence, Scott Laver referred a graduate student to me to participate on behalf of HO in a questionnaire designed to be part of the student's Master's Thesis on trail planning.

Nastawgan Trails Crew Appeal for Tourism Sustainability Act: Following HO Board's Sept 27<sup>th</sup> agreement to a signatory to this appeal, Tom Friesen discussed further developments with Les Wilcox, Pres. of Nastawgan Trails by conference call.

Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation (OTMPC)-I completed an OTMPC "satisfaction" survey circulated to HO on Jan. 7/09.

Canadian Trails Federation (CTF): The CTF has been asked by the federal government to collect and submit information on non-motorized trail development projects. This appears to be part of the government's pre-budget consultations. Harold Sellers then circulated this request to all HO Board members on Jan. 7/09.

Algoma Forest Management Plan: On Feb 16 I reviewed the Plan with MNR staff (Gary Raines) in Sault Ste. Marie with respect to the Plan's effects on trails. Mr Raines stated the Voyageur Trail Association had been contacted through a connection with VTA member Don McGorman. I also contacted Mike Landmark of VTA by email and offered HO involvement. No reply as of yet.

GreenToronto Stewardship Forum- On Feb 28, I participated in this forum to publicize Humber Valley Heritage Trail Association and Cold Creek Conservation Stewardship trails at Black Creek Village.

West Vaughan Transportation Study- On March 10 I attended an open house to review role of trails in this study.

Humber Valley Heritage Trail Association Annual General Meeting: On April 8, HVHTA was honoured to have Terri Leroux present a PowerPoint presentation on HO programs. HVHTA also previewed an early version in DVD format of its 15 year history and success as a stewardship organization.

GTA West Corridor Environmental Assessment Study- On March 5, I attended an open house to promote the integration of pedestrian facilities into the plan. On May 7 I received the following reply from the EA consultant: "In response to your comments requesting that walking and hiking tourism opportunities be promoted by the study, the Project Team will be examining Transportation Demand Management (TDM) alternatives to shift demand from the existing transportation network to alternative modes of transportation, principally transit, cycling and

walking. Tourism and recreation has been identified as a key factor influencing transportation system demand and will be considered throughout the study.”

Review of Trail Use Policy: Following a request by Tom Friesen Jan. 21<sup>st</sup> at HO BD meeting for a review of HO’s Shared use policy, the Policy and Advocacy Committee (Bill Wilson, Harold Sellers, Richard Boehnke) submitted a report to Tom on Feb 2/09. At March 12<sup>th</sup> HO Executive Meeting it was agreed to send out the Policy review paper to all the Board before the May 30th Bd meeting in time for Board members to make informed comment on May 30th.

On May 30<sup>th</sup>, The Board approved a resolution as follows:

"The HO Board, in general, supports the HO Policy Committee's case for further policy development for trail use as stated in their Feb 2/09 paper and that the HO Executive through its Policy Committee, further develop HO policy with respect to trail use, particularly for pedestrian-only trails, and that HO Executive report back to the HO Board with a draft policy for consideration."

The Policy committee composed of me , Richard Boenkhe, and Frieda Baldwin met once and had numerous emails back and forth over the summer involving 6 drafts of a new proposed policy. This draft was submitted to HO Executive. President Tom Friesen, with agreement of executive sent this on to all Board members for considered review and comment by Sept 26th. On Sept 26<sup>th</sup> the HO Board approved a 6-page document entitled “Hike Ontario Position Statement On Use Of Trails”.

Caring for the Coast Forum: I represented HO at the Forum Oct 22nd-23rd in Leamington. This Forum considered how to create a coordinated network of trails in the unique Carolinian natural environment along the Lake Erie coast.

### **Hike Canada En Marche**

Submitted by David Francis

Hike Ontario represents the interests of Ontario's hikers and walkers at Hike Canada En Marche through a nominated representative to the Hike Canada Board of Directors. Our current representatives are David Francis and Deanna Rando.

For over thirty years, *Hike Canada En Marche* has been working on the vision of *a footpath across Canada*. But the trail is not an end in itself; it is a means of achieving these four goals:

- To promote general fitness through healthy outdoor activities;
- To help preserve places of natural, scenic, heritage, and historical values;
- To promote non-motorized tourism and education; and
- To promote bonding of unifying environmental interests across the nation.

Piece by piece, the scenic 10,000 kilometre foot trail is growing to connect the Atlantic to the Pacific. Our long-held vision of a greenway connecting existing natural-surface pedestrian trail systems with parklands and wild places is becoming a reality. Already, trails spanning much of British Columbia , Ontario , Quebec and New Brunswick are in use. Once established, the trail

corridor will help to protect our heritage of natural landscapes and historic places, and provide passage, habitat, and refuge for wildlife.

Hike Canada's biggest challenge has been to maintain contact with all the provinces across Canada. Currently 8 provinces are represented and include:

1. Newfoundland
2. Nova Scotia
3. New Brunswick
4. Quebec
5. Ontario
6. Manitoba
7. Alberta
8. British Columbia

The board has been experimenting with internet technology using Skype with limited success. Some members get dropped in the middle of the call and find it difficult to get reconnect. However, it has been very gratifying to make some progress on the many hiking issues that affect us all.

Newfoundland East Coast Trail Association is in an expansion mode with funding for the trail north of Saint John. Nova Scotia is working on the International Appalachian Trail extending the existing trail in the US up into Canada. New Brunswick has completed the National Hiking Trail through its province. Quebec continues to work on its extensive trail system. Ontario is working to connect the gap between the Oak Ridges Trail and Rideau Trail. Manitoba is working on building its trail infrastructure. Saskatchewan is interested in joining Hike Canada once they have become more organized. Alberta has a very active hiking trails group and continues to promote hiking activities. British Columbia is coordinating with the Vancouver Island Spine Trails Group to form a trail from Victoria to Port Hardy.

Like all trail organizations, so much more could be done with more funding including upgrading the Hike Canada web site and promoting the National Hiking Trail across Canada.

### **Ontario Trails Council Report**

Submitted by Terri LeRoux

Hike Ontario represents the interests of hikers and walkers on the Ontario Trails Council (OTC) Board of Directors. Following Harold Sellers move to British Columbia, Terri LeRoux was appointed the new Hike Ontario rep to the OTC board.

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.

## OTC Goals:

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

The Annual OTC AGM and conference was held in Belleville on June 20, 2009. At this time the OTC membership voted to amend their bylaws and change the composition of the board from 18 appointed members to 12 elected members. The Ontario Trails Council has 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 OTC re-elected Mr. Jack de Wit as its President at its Annual General Meeting. Mr. de Wit continues to provide skill and leadership excellence to the OTC. Through many years of service to the trails sector, through Equine Canada, Ontario Equestrian Federation and to a variety of service and business interests in Durham Region.

As a Board member of the Ontario Equestrian Federation and Equine Canada, Jack has had the opportunity to lead trails development in both Ontario and at the national level. For Jack, when he's acting with the OTC, he's a horseman working on behalf of all trails and trail users.

"I want to make this clear to everyone, when I'm at the OTC I'm acting in the interests of all trails and trail users, and that's the tone we expect at the OTC. For me it's paramount that all trails work co-operatively to solve trail issues, to whomever they belong. In that way, the OTC occupies a unique role. We're here to help ALL trails, regarding all trail issues."

"The issue of trail development and the management of issues through the leadership and support of the Ontario Trails Council, is key to the success of all groups involved in trails in Ontario," says Mr. deWit. "Working collaboratively in support of all trail issues and all trail user groups is the fundamental role I see for myself and the OTC as we move forward to 2010 and beyond."

Bringing the staffs from many trail management organizations to the OTC Board table provides an opportunity for new direction and issue specific management. The involvement of the Executive Directors and Managers of trails systems ensures the OTC will be on top of the needs of these important community resources from all over Ontario. Through the guidance of this team of trail experts the OTC looks forward to the future.



"We are sure that with our knowledge and problem-solving capabilities we'll be able to provide a strong lead role to the implementation of the Ontario Trails Strategy and to our member organizations," adds Jack. It's Mr. deWit's purpose to expand the role of the OTC, to support new partners and to strengthen all trail operations in Ontario.

In 2009, the Ontario Trails Council was the recipient of the 2009 American Trails Website Awards in the "Best use of Photographs" category. [www.americantrails.org](http://www.americantrails.org)

For more info please visit [www.ontariotrails.on.ca](http://www.ontariotrails.on.ca)

## **Committee Reports**

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

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### **Certification and Awards**

Submitted by David Francis

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

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

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

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

The Policy Manual has been updated and keeps a standard of methods procedures. Wendy Hoernig did extensive work updating the Certified Hike Leader manual. We are still working on the designs for the new long distance awards.

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

### **Communications**

Submitted by Terri LeRoux and John Fortier

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

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

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

The responsibilities of the Communications Committee include:

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

## **Fund Development**

Submitted by Terri LeRoux

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

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

Responsibilities of the committee include:

- developing and implementing a comprehensive fundraising plan that will ensure the sustainability of Hike Ontario
- Managing the Friends of Hike Ontario Program including: preparing direct mail solicitation letters to garner individual support; providing Friends with frequent updates

on HO activities and; seeking and creating opportunities to increase annual giving and individual donations to Hike Ontario

- Managing grant applications including: ensuring board and committee adherence to the Hike Ontario Grant Policy and; researching opportunities and applying for grants to support HO programs and services
- Seeking opportunities for partnerships and collaborations with corporations and the business sector
- Managing our Donor Recognition Program and ensuring that all supporters are adequately recognized
- Providing a list of current (fiscal year) donors for inclusion in Hike Ontario's Annual Report

### **Safe Hikers Program**

Submitted by Deanna Rando

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

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

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

### **Risk Management & Insurance**

Submitted by John Fortier

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

#### **Club Insurance Assessment**

The cost of Commercial General Liability insurance for 2009 has remained at the previous year's level. Total insurance cost for 2009 was \$40,400.10. Each Club was assessed according to the

Hike Ontario Insurance Manual based on number of members and length of trail. A copy of the assessment formula from the Hike Ontario Insurance Manual was included with the September Board minutes.

## Insurance

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

3 issued to fulfill funding requirements for National Trails Coalition grants

## Remaining COI's

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

## Hike Leader and Instructor Coverage

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

## Imagine Canada – Risk Management Webinars

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

## Incident Reports

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

## Giant Hogweed

This plant has been reported adjacent to the Thames Valley Trail north of London, Uthoff Trail in the Ganaraska System and on the Oak Ridges Trail. It has the capability of causing severe

burns when combined with exposure to sunlight which will recur due solely to subsequent sunlight exposures.

Note: Hike Ontario training covers both of these hazards.

### **Young Hikers Program**

Submitted by Terri LeRoux

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Educator Notes

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

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

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

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

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

For more info visit [www.hikeontario.com/yhp](http://www.hikeontario.com/yhp)

## Hike Ontario Member Club Reports

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

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

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

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

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### Algoma Highlands Conservancy

The principal focus of the Algoma Highlands Conservancy is that of a land trust (e.g. Robertson Lake Cliffs), but it also provides opportunities for undertaking educational programs (e.g. Lake Superior State University), for research into forest management techniques through the Canadian Forest Service, for the protection of species at risk (e.g. the peregrine release program) and for non-motorized recreational activities. [www.algomahighlandsconservancy.org](http://www.algomahighlandsconservancy.org)

### Avon Trail

Submitted by Karen LeFrancois- Hill

100 km hiking trail from St Marys to Conestogo, northeast of Waterloo. The Avon Trail links the Thames Valley Trail with the Grand Valley Trail. Tel: (519) 273-6199

The Avon Trail is a single file footpath back-country style of trail, travelling 110 kms from St Marys to the Village of Conestogo north west of Waterloo, linking the Thames Valley trail in the south with the Grand Valley Trail in the north.

For the past year, the Avon Trail hiking club continues to offer two hiking opportunities each week, one on Tuesdays and one on Saturday or Sunday. As a hiking club, the Tuesday's are focused on hiking the Avon Trail, while the weekend hikes travel to neighbouring trails.

We have focused on promotion this past year in an attempt to increase membership, as our membership remains steady with the majority of hikers from the retirees in the area. We have made networking inroads with other like minded outdoor groups, including the Field Naturalists, Healthy Living Perth, Perth Visitors Association, the local in motion Committee and



the Perth Health Unit. Contacts with the local YMCA, the recreation department of the Towns of St Marys and Stratford, and Upper Thames Conservation Authority did not support further contact for running a co- outdoor event.

A Celebration of a new section of Trail opening happened in May and was widely advertised with some new members joining. We have the hikes listed on e health plus on the In motion site, and are listed in the two local papers.

Our Trail Maintenance crew continues to stay ahead of the phenomenal weed growth, re routes and upgrading of bridges to meet standards as outlined in our newly adopted Avon trail Guide for Trail Workers.

Current challenges including most of the trail being on private landowners as each year one of the sections needs a re route due to a new landowner; another challenge includes the Provincial highway expansion directly in the path of the trail; and a small pool of active hikers to draw from to fill Board positions.

We have appreciated the help offered from the members of Hike Ontario and especially from our President, Tom. He has been an inspiration to us.

### **Bayfield River Valley Trail**

Submitted by Roger Lewington

Local walkers/hikers as well as visitors will all enjoy physical and mental benefits from their outdoor experiences along the trails that this group plans to develop along the beautiful Bayfield River Valley. Box 531, Bayfield, Ontario N0M 1G0.

Over the past two years, the Bayfield River Valley Trail Association has opened three diverse, environmentally sensitive and challenging walking trails in and around the Bayfield area on the eastern shore of Lake Huron.

The enchantment of Bayfield is reflected in her history and the 'Heritage Trail' winds its way for about 2 Km past many of the historically significant and attractive locations in the village. The 2 km 'Sawmill Trail' traces the old pioneer and native path down to the Bayfield River to original 1841 dam and bridge. The 5 Km 'Woodland Trail' begins in the village where walkers will pass old churches and cottages and then meander through a beautiful and varied woodland setting in the Bayfield River Valley following old unused quarry and lumber roads.

Our ultimate goal is to negotiate access to and then build safe, accessible trails using the 150 year old fishing and hunting paths along the Bayfield River Valley from Lake Huron inland to Clinton. When complete, we will have over 50 kilometres of wonderful walking paths to enjoy.

## **Bighead River Heritage Association (Trout Hollow Trail)**

Submitted by Ron Knight

A walking trail that travels through private property along both sides of the Bighead River.  
[www.bigheadriver.org](http://www.bigheadriver.org)

We manage the Trout Hollow Trail which travels both sides of the Bighead River in Meaford for about 7 Km. The Trout Hollow Trail along the Bighead River in Meaford continues to be well used with an increase in the number of hikes organized by various groups who consider it a manageable day hike destination. We have noticed an increase in the usage of the trail by local families and their pets. (Not a problem so far).

We have the usual maintenance concerns since the river changes course each spring in some areas and there is always a few re-routes necessary.

As with many trails, motorized vehicle usage, insurance coverage, enlarging the membership and signage are all concerns that we must deal with on a regular basis.

We are very appreciative of the support that we are able to receive from Hike Ontario in the form of hiking information, leader training, promotion of our events and a sharing of the Trail insurance.

## **Bruce Trail Conservancy**

Submitted by Peter Leeney

The Bruce Trail is the oldest and longest continuous footpath in Canada. It runs along the Niagara Escarpment from Niagara to Tobermory, spanning more than 850km of main trail. Nine Bruce Trail Clubs support the Bruce Trail Conservancy. Each Club manages a section of the Trail.  
[www.bruce-trail.org](http://www.bruce-trail.org)

During this past year, the Conservancy preserved 17 properties along the Niagara Escarpment – the greatest number secured in a single year. These acquisitions preserved 547 acres of the Escarpment and 7.3 km of Trail on the Optimum Route. The portion of secured Trail now stands at 45%. – this represents 388 km of trail on BTC and public land.

More than 6600 acres of land along the Escarpment are now being stewarded by over 140 land stewards. In the spring 40 volunteers from the Bruce Trail Conservancy and Credit Valley Conservation removed 348 pounds of garlic mustard from the Terra Cotta Conservation Area. Over the past year 26 trail re-routes saw 27 km of trail moved but 53 km of new trail have been established. Of particular interest, in the South Hockley Valley, thanks to new or modified handshake agreements with seven landowners and a BTC purchase of a key property, 5 km of road has been replaced by 6 km of trail through pleasant rolling countryside along the south rim of the Valley.

Membership remained unchanged at the same level as in 2008 – about 8600. New memberships were up 7% but were offset by a decline in renewals. Despite the economic recession, we are pleased to report that donors and supporters gave at the same level as the previous year.

### **Durham Outdoors Club**

Submitted by Mary Perkins

The Durham Outdoors Club began with a small group of like-minded individuals who got together informally to enjoy outdoor pursuits in each other's company. Hiking, canoeing, cycling, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing are among the clubs more common pursuit. [www.durhamoutdoorsclub.ca](http://www.durhamoutdoorsclub.ca)

Km's of trail: 0

# of members : 153 members as of October 2009.

This is similar to our membership number of the previous year. We expect to have some additional members before our year-end of March 2010.

# of current board members and current vacancies: SEVEN ON EXECUTIVE, NO VACANCIES. (Note: there are also FIVE 'Event Coordinators', one vacancy – Hike Coordinator)

Volunteer efforts include:

- preparing for and attending 10 evening meetings plus 3-4 Newsletter meetings
- maintaining membership files and financial records
- updating the Web site
- preparing and distributing the quarterly Newsletter, and the actual organization of leading hikes, bike trips or social activities.
- 

# of guided hikes or organized activities held: many.

Although we hike, our group is not a dedicated hiking group. This past year we have seen an increased interest in biking (every Tuesday night in summer) and some rail-trail weekend rides. Wednesday night 'nosy neighbour' walks give members a chance to keep in touch from May to August. Members also attended the Millbrook 4<sup>th</sup> Line outdoor theatre and folk festivals (Mariposa, Shelter Valley), a dog-sledding weekend, YMCA Camp Wanakita, and enjoyed canoe trips (day, weekend and week-long).

Special projects or Major events: We recognize that we do not maintain any trails, so we made a contribution this year to Orono Crown Lands Trust, and to O.R.T.A (Clarington section).

Major issues facing your club: April 2010 elections, and filling Hiking Coordinator vacancy.

## **Elgin Hiking Trail Club**

Submitted by Brian Wilsdon

South Western Ontario's jewel of trails with 41 kilometres of trails through the Carolinian Forests with trail elevations of approx. 70 meters. [www.elginhikingtrail.org](http://www.elginhikingtrail.org)

What a year it's been for rain and wacky weather! The Elgin Hiking Trail Club continued to maintain our 41 K trail from Port Stanley north to South Bourne where the trail is connected to the Thames Valley Trail. Membership sits at 140, (an increase over last year) and we have 35 landowners.

Our annual meeting in April was encouraging, not only because it attracted 50 members, and our treasurer was able to report healthy financial conditions, but it also resulted in two important open executive positions being filled – those of newsletter editor and membership director, plus we now also have an official Web Master. This summer we also upgraded the newsletter to full colour on the back and front page.

Because of the unco-operative weather, much of the trail got overgrown with weeds; July it was so wet, August it was so humid, and it wasn't until October that the weed whacking was completed this year. The #7 Army Cadets helped with a couple of projects on October 24, replacing one piece of the boardwalk just north of Port Stanley, and rebuilding a set of stairs going down a steep grade across from Union Station.

The annual candlelit Christmas Spirit walk will be held Saturday, Dec 5, with tours running from 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. The event usually attracts over 600 people to Springwater CA. The entertainment this year includes the Back In Time barbershop quartet, a magician, and several musical groups. Proceeds are split between the club and Catfish Creek Conservation Authority. So despite the challenges of the weather, the Elgin Hiking Club is doing well.

## **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 Fergus, Belwood, Orton, Hillsburgh and Erin. [www.trailway.org](http://www.trailway.org)

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The Elora Cataract Trailway Association (ECTA) focuses on Promoting, Enhancing and Protecting the Elora Cataract Trailway. The ECTA had several events and projects on the go in 2009.

The most recent event was a successful “Hike the Trail” walk on Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup> held during Ontario Hiking Week. This event was held with the support of “in motion” and the township of Centre Wellington. The route took walkers not only on the Elora Cataract Trailway but also highlighted several adjacent trails.

As part of the 5 year Trailway improvement plan, the ECTA planted 150 container grown trees along the Trailway and renovated the Gerrie Road (Elora) trailhead.

A new initiative this year was Project B.O.O.T. (Benches on our Trailway) launched in conjunction with the Belwood, Elora, Fergus, Marsville, Hillsburgh, and Erin LIONS clubs. Project B.O.O.T is geared to installing commemorative benches along the Trailway that anyone can purchase from the various LIONS clubs. Currently there have been 5 benches installed by the LIONS clubs. See [www.trailway.org](http://www.trailway.org) for more details.

The 2009 AGM was held in Belwood on April 5th. After the usual association business and updates we had two guest speakers talking about “The Trails of Wellington County”. Our two speakers were Sarah Wilhelm (Planner) & Denise Boyd-Dunlop (Planning Technician) both from the planning and Development Department of the County of Wellington. Sarah & Denise discussed the various trails in Wellington County, the current initiative to map all of the public trails in the county and discuss some potential new trails being developed.

Our 2010 AGM is scheduled for April 4th, 2010 to be held at Lions Hall in Belwood. All are welcome.

Our past Newsletters are now available as a PDF download from our website.

### **Friends of the Trail**

Submitted by Bill Gray

A non-profit community based organization that assists the Ministry Of Natural Resources in developing, maintaining and promoting the Lower Trent Rail Trail, a former rail bed between Trenton and Glen Ross. [www.friendsofthetrail.ca](http://www.friendsofthetrail.ca).

2008/2009 was a year of tremendous accomplishments for the organization having constructed double the amount of trail anticipated as part of a major construction project outlined on last year’s annual report; raised large amounts of funds; assisted in community building activities and most importantly completed a seven kilometre accessible recreational non-motorized trail for the enjoyment of the community.

Following strategic plans and maintaining momentum while dealing with new challenges has allowed the FOTT to grow as an organization while affirming its appreciation for the support provided by local businesses, the community and the citizens of the Quinte region.

The Board of Directors defined emergency access to the LTT to mean only: That fire, police and ambulance services required for the purpose of safety and security of individuals and property

in the performance of their legal duties. The Board reviewed the National Trails Coalition funding agreement and authorized the President and Vice-President, as agents to bind the corporation to this agreement.

As part of the NTC grant the newest construction project was started; it involves the section between Lock Road and Bernard Long Road.; work involves brushing, grading and resurfacing the 2.5 kilometre stretch in addition to refurbishing the bridge and constructing a path to join with the Bleasdel Boulder trails. This will start the southern trail and then continuing the trail through Sunoco's Property section and onto Batawa Development property.

The trail within the village of Frankford was completed well under budget thanks a major grant and other donations received as well as material discounts and donations from local retailers. The completion of the section has resulted in a vast increase in trail use including mobility-impaired individuals on scooters and wheelchairs.

Membership is steadily growing. With 80 members at fiscal end versus 66 members from last year and a total of 101 members year to date.

2008/2009 was a very successful year for fundraising. Major grants were awarded by Bayshore Credit Union Community Investment Fund, the John M. & Bernice Parrott Foundation, Kay Stafford Memorial Fund, Trenval Batawa Study, Trenval, Ontario Power Generation, Union Gas Community Connections and The National Trails Coalition Stimulus Program. Continued support is provided by the Founders Club and Trail Blazers. Members of the FOTT have been exceedingly generous with donations and by providing many hours of volunteer labour . A Flea Market held in September generated great funds. The 3rd Annual Charity Golf Tournament was a great success with record-high participation and sponsorships yielding a 30% increase in funds. Plans are underway for the 4th Annual Golf Tournament to be held June 13, 2010. The FOTT hosted several hiking days, a Riverfest Fun Run and once again assisted with the 8 Wing Surf and Turf event.

The increase in the number of events makes it necessary for FOTT to look to partner with groups that could use the Lower Trent Trail as their home trail to assist with events coordination and organization. Projects for next year are way on the way. The organization's focus is on the continuation and maintenance of the trail, increasing the number of members and growing its involvement in the community.

### **Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association**

Submitted by David Beevis

Dedicated to the conservation of our natural resources and has as its objective, the establishment and maintenance of a hiking trail for public use from Port Hope to the Bruce Trail near Collingwood. [www.Ganaraska-Hiking-Trail.ca](http://www.Ganaraska-Hiking-Trail.ca)

The Association consists of nine member clubs which maintain the 500 kilometre long Ganaraska Hiking Trail from Port Hope on Lake Ontario to Wasaga Beach on Georgian Bay. The Association is run by a Board of Volunteers drawn from the member clubs. The Association holds a Spring Executive Meeting and an Annual General Meeting in November. As of the 1<sup>st</sup> August, total membership of the 9 clubs that make up the Association was 539. For comparison, in 2001 the total was 611, in 2005 it was 440.

In the past two years the terminus of the trail in Wasaga Beach has been extended by 11.3 km. to link with the Trans Canada Trail.

Early this year the Ganaraska Hiking Trail was selected to host the North American debut of the OXFAM Trailwalker Challenge. The goal is for a team of four to complete 100 kms. in 48 hours as a team, not as a relay. Seventy-five percent of the course must be on trail rather than road; it is for that reason that the Ganaraska Hiking Trail was selected to host the event. Each team must raise \$2500:00 to participate.

OXFAM Trailwalker Canada took place on the weekend of 24th – 26th July. It started on the Trail at the historic Fort Willow Depot in Springwater near Barrie and ended at Wasaga Beach along the shoreline of Georgian Bay, Ontario. Twenty-four teams of four people completed the challenge, the first taking 20 hrs. And 4 minutes to complete the 100 kilometres; six other teams retired. The event raised \$230 520:00 for OXFAM. All proceeds go towards OXFAM Canada's efforts to make a difference in the lives of women and girls living in poverty in the third world.

In April the Association signed a User Agreement with the Simcoe County Forest which allows the Association to continue to run the Ganaraska trail through the Forest. This was in response to the new policy of the Forest that requires all user groups to sign such agreements. Other forests are moving towards similar agreements.

Last year the Association recognized that it needs to put more effort into public relations. The Association created a PR Director position and, as of April, the position has been filled by Mr. Bob Bowles. Two other Director positions are currently vacant.

During the early part of the year the Trail suffered from vandalism of blazes in the Wilderness and the Pine Ridge sections.

For some time our Association has been faced with the possibility of paying user fees in order to run the trail through county forests at the northern and southern ends. We have asked Hike Ontario to clarify its policy on such fees and whether they have a preferred policy that applies to all hiking routes.

Some of our members are concerned by the implications of existing and pending accessibility legislation. Advisors to some hiking clubs interpret the legislation as requiring the whole of a trail to be accessible. Our Association trail standard is minimum impact on the environment with no man-made structures, although there are exceptions. Again, we would like Hike Ontario

to re-iterate its interpretation of existing and pending accessibility legislation and whether they have a policy on accessibility.

### **Grand Valley Trails Association**

Submitted by Charles Whitlock

The Grand Valley Trail is a marked footpath stretching more than 250 km between Rock Point Provincial Park on Lake Erie to the town of Alton, near Orangeville [www.gvta.on.ca](http://www.gvta.on.ca)

The GVTA held its Annual General Meeting on Sunday, May 3, 2009. The Association is pleased to announce that Georgia Mulholland has been re-elected President. The position of Vice-President remains open. We also attach to this report a copy of the Board elected for the 2009/2010 term. This elected board represents years of experience in trail maintenance and administration experience.

Charles Whitlock was re-elected as Government & Public Relations Director, and has a dual function as Hike Ontario Representative. He co-shares this position with Ruth Oswald. Due to prior commitments he is not able to attend.

Total membership as of March 2009 is 402 as compared to March 2008 is 404. There are 35 life members as of March 2009 as compared to 32 life standing members in March 2008.

By-laws: Bill MacDonald, Past President, GVTA continues to be instrumental in reviewing, consulting and updating GVTA's By-law. His current residence is in the UK.

The main features in the GVTA By-law re-write are as follows:

- Complete rewrite and reorganization.
- Separate bylaws for the GVTA and for Grand Valley Trail Clubs.
- Each Club to have a Club Representative on the GVTA Board.
- Club's governing body named Council of Stewards, to avoid confusion with GVTA's Board of Directors.
- A financial framework to allow Clubs to operate freely and effectively, while maintaining ultimate control by the GVTA. This is because the Clubs will be divisions of the GVTA, not legally separate, so that the GVTA is responsible for the Clubs' financial commitments.
- Careful balance between the bylaws, which cannot be changed at the whim of the Board, and the Standing Rules, which are set by resolutions of the Board.
- Safeguards for the GVTA's status as a charity.
- Provision for possible future employees, Executive Committee, and non-Director Officers.
- Greater ease of use, from plain language, shorter clauses, table of contents, and larger print with use of bold and underlining. The electronic version has hyperlinks to all Articles from the table of contents.

A copy of the By-law is on the GVTA website: <http://www.gvta.on.ca/bylaws.html>



Strategic Plan 2007-2011: \_As part of the Strategic Plan 2007-2011, GVTA continues to work along side the Upper Grand Trailway Association in coordinating the re-routing of the main trail north of Belwood to Luther Marsh, retaining the route to Alton as a side trail to connect with the Bruce Trail system.

“The northern gateway is currently the site of the Pinnacle in the Village of Alton; this may change if an approved route to Luther Marsh is found. The head waters area of the Grand River has long been a goal of the GVT but in 1987 a link to the Bruce Trail was the preferred destination. In 2006 attention is again turning to Luther Marsh as the preferred trail terminus. A link which primarily would be through multi-use trails included motorized vehicles shared with the Upper Grand Trailway may serve initially. It is recommended that routing to the UGT be along the river valley lands as much as possible to preserve the GVT character.

As report last year, once a definite link to Luther Marsh is established this will be the trail head and the main trail will be signed from upper Lake Bellwood; the northern gateway will then be the terminus at Luther Marsh. The trail route to Alton could be signed as a blue side trail just the same as the current Bruce Trail side trail which meets the GVT in Alton. However it is recommended that consideration be given to maintaining the Pinnacle in Alton, current gateway to the GVT, as a third gateway because of its historical significance to the GVTA. Both the Grand River Conservation Authority and the Upper Grand Trailway Committee will be consulted with regard to agreements for access to the trailway and the Luther Marsh Conservation Area prior to finalizing the route to Luther Marsh.”

Several meetings have taken place with the Upper Grand Trailway Association on this trail re-route.

75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Grand River Conservation Authority : 2009 marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Grand River Conservation Authority. GRCA was established to improve the water quality, reduce flood damage and facilitate watershed planning. The GVTA footpath, in part, follows close to the 300 kilometers of the Grand waterway. In honour of this anniversary the GRCA approached GVTA to participate in this anniversary by leading walks through the authorities land. The GVTA has accommodated this request, by leading several family walks, along with an end-to-end walk of the GVTA. Approximately 25 members will complete the walk by December 2009.

Brochures and Guidebook: As with all club, the GVTA strives to be current with all of its publications. A new guide book, 2<sup>nd</sup> printing of the 6<sup>th</sup> edition has been completed, along with 5000 brochures.

### **Guelph Hiking Trail Club**

Submitted by Mike Curtis

Dedicated to recreational hiking, and to building and maintaining rural trails in the general area between the Grand Valley (Fergus, Elora, Cambridge) on the west and the Bruce Trail

(Limehouse--near Acton) on the east. The Club is also involved with others in building multi-use trails on recently abandoned railway lines. [www.guelphhiking.com](http://www.guelphhiking.com)

The Guelph Hiking Trail Club has had two major achievements this past year. We produced, with the assistance of the TD Friends of the Environment, a new guidebook. Our previous one was ten years old and many changes had to be made. Since publication in the spring, we have sold over 200 copies! Our second achievement was the successful application for an Ontario Trillium grant, which enabled us to stone dust the Waterloo section of Kissing Bridge Trailway, part of our section of the 45km multipurpose trail between Guelph and Millbank.

Our membership is down slightly at around 140, however we continue to maintain a strong hiking program and will have our usual 4 “slide nights” during the winter. In cooperation with the Upper Grand District Board of Education, we had an “Introduction to Hiking” program which enabled newcomers to experience the pleasures of exercise in a safe environment. Our website, [www.guelphhiking.com](http://www.guelphhiking.com), continues to draw interest from the general public.

### **Humber Valley Heritage Trail Association**

Submitted by Jerry Gorman

The HVHTA has built and is maintaining a hiking trail along the beautiful Humber valley north from Bolton, Ontario to join with the Bruce Trail and the Caledon Trailway. It is hoped, with other chapters, to eventually develop a trail all the way down the Humber Valley to the Waterfront Trail on Lake Ontario. [www.humbertrail.org](http://www.humbertrail.org)

HVHTA had another very active and successful year on the trail. We currently have 101 paid up members. Our year officially began with our AGM in April, which was attended by, among others, Mayor Marolyn Morrison and her husband John. Our guest speaker was Terri LeRoux who gave an excellent power point presentation on Hike Ontario.

#### Promotion & Publicity

HVHTA was invited by the Toronto & Region Conservation Authority to participate in their celebration of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Humber Rivers designation as a Heritage River. This event was held in conjunction with the Bolton Fall Fair where we had a multi faceted display featuring our recently purchased DVD player – screen. In house talent produced several very sophisticated DVDs which offered viewers a continuous presentation of slides and video. They showed trail scenes and explained HVHTA’s aims, objectives and history. New display banners were made for the occasion and several thousand updated, full colour membership brochures were printed. Promotional clothing was on sale at our booth. In addition to a lot of public interest, we signed up 3 new members who wished to become trail custodians.

Our web site has recently been upgraded. We are now hosted by Google, (for free) and the site has more colour. Our URL has remained the same ( [www.Humbertrail.org](http://www.Humbertrail.org).) but we have added

another link to the site. A local photographer requested our permission to sell photos of our trail and in return has agreed to link his web site of photographs to our HVHTA site.

Waterproof display boxes have been built and installed at all trail heads to hold our membership brochures.

We secured a grant of \$1450 from the T.D. Trust Friends of the Environment Fund for outdoor education / trail development which we have donated to support a project by the Albion Hills Conservation Area outdoor education school.

The Kleinberg Chapter of HVHTA have been leading a regular series of hikes throughout the year on various sections of our trail.

#### Trail Maintenance & Expansion:

The Kleinberg Chapter are negotiating with a local golf course for their 'used' 100 foot bridge. This span is required to bridge the Humber River in their ongoing efforts to physically connect the village of Kleinberg to Bolton and Palgrave

In Bolton we are still working with the Town of Caledon and the TRCA for the necessary legal clearances along the Cold Creek tributary, to build a 3 ½ km loop in our Humber Valley trail.

In May we did a complete trail audit. Throughout the summer and fall, trail maintenance crews under the supervision of our Trail Maintenance Director have been busy clearing away recent deadfall and luxurious weed growth from the trail. This summer appears to have been a very wet and windy one! A major challenge has been to repair and rebuild some of our bridges that are showing signs of age or succumbing to erosion after 15 years on the trail.

#### **Huronian Trails & Greenways**

Submitted by Frieda Baldwin

Huronian Trails and Greenways (HTG) is a registered not-for-profit charitable corporation dedicated to promote and enable the development of a sustainable network of trails and greenways in Simcoe County, Ontario. [www.simcoecountytrails.net](http://www.simcoecountytrails.net)

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

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

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

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

- conduct an inventory of trails in the county, and analyze the gaps in terms of building an interconnected well built trails network
- produce trail building and management guidelines for local municipalities
- develop signage standards and produce signs
- conduct a marketing campaign to promote trails and how they fit into an Active Transportation strategy.

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

### **Lost River Walks, North Toronto Green Community**

Submitted by Shachindra Tripathi

The objective of Lost River Walks is to encourage understanding of the city as a part of nature rather than apart from it, and to appreciate and cherish our heritage. Create an appreciation of the city's intimate connection to its water systems, by tracing the courses of forgotten streams, by learning about our natural and built heritage; and by sharing this information with others.

[www.lostrivers.ca](http://www.lostrivers.ca)

The Lost River Walks help people to appreciate their intimate connections to the water systems that form an essential part of their lives, and take people on a fascinating journey into our history. Lost River Walks are a great way to get to know your local watersheds - the first step to protecting their health. Since 1995 over 18,000 people have participated in Lost River Walks.

Lost River walks increased from 41 last year to 47 this year (October 1<sup>st</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup>), led by 26 volunteer walk leaders.

The North Toronto Green Community is one of many groups committed to restoring our urban watersheds to a state of healthy vibrant living habitat. Lost River Walks are a joint project of the NTGC, the Toronto Field Naturalists and community partners including Evergreen, Riversides, Taylor Massey Project, Friends of the Don East, TRCA, LEAF, Humber Heritage and others. Lost Rivers have been featured in University of Toronto Alumnae Magazine, Canadian Geographic Travel, Toronto Star, CBC Ideas, and other publications

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

Lost Rivers Slide Show: tells the story of our lost creeks and the basics of urban ecology and watershed thinking. Please be sure to book well ahead of time.

New Field Guide and Website: Lost Rivers, in partnership with Riversides, has developed a new series of walks and workshops about water in the city. We celebrated World Water Day on March 21, 2008 with the launch of a new website [www.thirstycitywalks.ca](http://www.thirstycitywalks.ca), and a new field guide to the Eglinton Park area (part of the Mud Creek watershed). There are now two more Field Guides and a fourth will be launched on World Toilet Day November 21, 2009. The walk and guide to the lower Don have been a smash hit with numerous requests for us to repeat the walk. This project is funded by Mountain Equipment Co-op, Environmental Defence Fund (Water Guardians Network), Canadian Environmental Law Association, and Unilever Canada. HTO: Toronto's Water from Lake Iroquois to Lost Rivers to Low-flow Toilets edited by [Christina Palassio](#) and [Wayne Reeves](#) was published at the end of 2008. Three Lost Rivers committee members, Richard Anderson, Ed Freeman and Helen Mills, contributed to the book as well as Georgia Ydreos and Liz Forsberg of Human River, who wrote on Garrison Creek, and Emily Alfred of Riversides who wrote on stormwater. Recommended for great Toronto water stories and a good overview of the issues.

Live Green Toronto Videos and Animator Training: Lost Rivers and Riversides participated in the making of two videos on water, one of which featured a tour of Mud Creek to illustrate urban water issues.

People:

Peter Hare

In November 2007, Peter Hare, a founding member of Lost Rivers passed away. He left a big hole and a wonderful legacy in the form of the website which he created after teaching himself HTML at the age of 78. He was and is greatly missed by all of us at Lost Rivers. Richard Anderson has taken on the job of updating the website walk lists.  
(Obit attached in case Hike Ontario wishes to include any more information)

#### Ed Freeman

We want to say a special thank you to Ed Freeman, who recently stepped down from the Lost Rivers Committee. Ed was the leader of the very first Lost Rivers Walk in 1995, and has been a key source of knowledge and walk leader for many years. Ed is known for leading some of the most fascinating walks in the City, and is a favourite for Heritage Toronto and TFN walks. He also developed the early maps for the first Lost Rivers Slide Show, and helped with putting together the graphics. The Lost Rivers Website is known for its great information on the ice ages and the geology of the Toronto area, especially the Don Valley Brick Works. This is due to the collaboration between Ed and Peter Hare. Ed has an encyclopaedic knowledge of Toronto's human and natural history and has authored a beautifully illustrated and concise pamphlet on the geological history of the Toronto area. (He created this while working with the Ministry of Natural Resources many years ago). Ed will still be leading some walks, so look out for his name on the list.

#### New Members of the Lost Rivers Committee:

John Wilson (leads the bike hikes)

Annie Macleod

Shachindra Tripathi (welcome back!)

#### Volunteer Opportunities:

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

Responsibilities can include all or some of the tasks below:

- Developing and leading walks
- Maintaining and updating the website
- Website development, and fundraising for this project
- Help with publicity (writing emails, events listings, press releases, articles, distributing flyers, contacting community groups, maintaining lists, hosting a table for an event, creating a listserver)
- Help during walks- eg.- welcome participants, help with getting walkers signed up, feedback forms
- Research and mapping of lost watersheds for development of walks and website content
- Depending on interest other tasks/responsibilities may also be created
- Attending meetings and possibly keeping minutes, with the Lost Rivers committee

Work will take place at various locations. Work will occur on weekdays. Some weekend and evening work might be required. Application Process:

Please email a resume and covering letter outlining your interest in this position to Paula Messina: <[paula@torontogreen.ca](mailto:paula@torontogreen.ca)>

### **Maitland Trail Association**

Submitted by Wendy Hoernig

#### Membership

Our annual membership topped off at 135 members – one less than last year’s total, more than half of which are family memberships. The membership includes a trail-work crew of 12 volunteers, and we have a full slate of Trail Rangers who each have a section of one of our trails to maintain and report on.

#### Our Year’s Activities

Last winter and spring were very hard on a large section of our trail (Benmiller area) where the Maitland River undermines the foot of the steep banks and we had several serious landslides, causing a temporary closure of a large section. Our first step was to create a permanent alternate route around this area for times when it is wet, and for future landslides – a very likely prognosis. It wasn’t until mid-August that repairs on the closed section were completed and it could be re-opened

About 1 1/3 km of the Goderich to Auburn Rail Trail was covered with stone dust (8’ width) at a cost of \$4200. The work crew are going to experiment doing a 4” swath for a short section (.35 km) to determine whether volunteer work + using the Town of Goderich’s spreader would result in a good enough surface (We can borrow it free of charge if we provide the driver). This would be a lot cheaper, if it proves to be successful.

Patrick Capper erected 41 wooden tree identification signs along the Maitland Woods trail. In Sept. we held a contest for high-school students, to see how many tree ID signs each could locate. Sadly, a disappointing number of students who took part. However this Urban Forest Trail is valued for it’s rich variety of plant and bird life, and is used by the local high school and a 4H group for environmental science outings.

The MTA Board of Directors has decided to invite the local high school’s Environmental Club/Class to choose a student to serve on our Board to represent young people.

Local ATV damage of natural environment areas continues to be a concern in our area. Our Board has a representative on a local panel that is working on a “Model for the Development, Maintenance and Monitoring of ATV Trails in Huron County”.

Our hikes have for the most part been very well attended and enthusiasm for our trails is strong. Groups and individuals continue take up and succeed in the challenge of hiking the Maitland Trail from end to end. (48+ km) The sight of nesting bald eagles rewarded spring hikers in one area this year.

One of our trails is the Maitland Woods, which is an urban tract of Carolinian forest and wetlands on the southern edge of Goderich. Recently a limited first edition of the 43 page

"Maitland Woods, An Urban Forest" was published, listing most of the species of upper canopy trees, lower canopy shrubs, and wildflowers. Photos and drawing of many of the species were include – a future edition will provide more recent discoveries and many more illustrations and photos. Recipients of this first edition have given it enthusiastic responses and have been very encouraging in their anticipation of the planned enhanced second edition.

Two memorial benches were built and set out in special locations to honour two of the MTA's long-term members/supporters. One of them, Jean Knight, was one of the founding members of the

We created a new, much improved MTA brochure and fortunately had only a small initial run printed – we have several changes to make in the next printing.

#### Challenges:

We've been contending with a lone disturbed-sounding individual who has been defacing signs, memorial benches, and outhouses with defamatory (and untrue) messages written in black marker about the Maitland Trail. Our local newspaper wrote a very good editorial about the local graffiti problem on trails. Whether as a result or not, the unpleasant messages have tapered off – although not stopped entirely yet.

A different (we think!) character has been getting a kick out of putting his (her) graffiti signature (tag?) in over 150 locations – trees, benches, signs etc. Luckily our very energetic and industrious trail-problem rescuer, Patrick Capper has been managing to erase all of these messages and signatures within a short time of their being discovered. We have asked for help from Crimestoppers and have put up posters offering a \$100 reward for help in finding the perpetrators.

We see lots of challenges ahead for the coming year, including a several year project of replacing boardwalks in the Maitland Woods with wider ones, and are looking forward to working together on them.

#### **Nastawgan Trails Inc.**

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



## **North Simcoe Rail Trail**

Submitted by Frieda Baldwin

A 30 km recreational trail in Springwater Township, for all season. [www.simcoecountytrails.net](http://www.simcoecountytrails.net)  
The North Simcoe Railtrail (NSRT) is managed by a group of volunteers, who were incorporated in 1993 as a not for profit charitable organization, called the North Simcoe Railtrail Inc.

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

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

## **Oak Ridges Trail Association**

Submitted by Stan Butcher

With over 200 kilometres of trail, ORTA is organized into ten "Chapters" along the Oak Ridges Moraine, so that local knowledge can be used to plan, develop and maintain the trail. The Chapters are: Caledon, King, Aurora, Richmond Hill, Whitchurch-Stouffville, Uxbridge, Scugog, Clarington, Hope/Hamilton and Northumberland. [www.oakridgestrail.org](http://www.oakridgestrail.org)

Changes. We have had to face two major changes this year. A year ago Harold Sellers advised us that they planned to move to B.C at the end of July to be closer to family. Around the same time it became known that the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation would not have finance available for projects beyond the end of 2009.

Several Members have stepped up to the plate to ensure the continued success of programs in which Harold had played a key role, including Hike Leader Certification, the monthly Discovery Nights and Wednesday Hikes. Participation in group hikes continues to increase with a trend towards shorter hikes (some of us as not as young as we used to be) and hikes designed for families. However, within this I'm detecting that some folk, rather than considering themselves as Members/Volunteers/Supporters, are acting like Customers waiting to be served. New faces on the Board include well qualified volunteers as Treasurer and *Trail Talk* Editor, but we have yet to find a new President and four Chapter Chairs are vacant. Our Membership is again on the decline.

Development. Harold's five and a half year engagement as Executive Director was funded to implement *A Strategic Plan for the Oak Ridges Trail 2004 - 2008*. The primary objective of this plan, to extend the trail across entire width of the Oak Ridges Moraine, is now virtually complete. This will be evident by the publication of the 5<sup>th</sup> Edition of our Guidebook, hopefully in time for Christmas, and installation of Gateways at Mono Mills – a junction with the Bruce Trail – and in the east at Castleton and Warkworth. With side trails the ORT now totals almost 300 km, 60% being 'off-road.' There are now 23 parking lots, additional lots having been created with assistance of the Conservation Authorities and Municipalities. 12 km of trail are now fully assessed under the UTAP scheme.

With widely based input from our Strategic Plan Advisory Committee, Harold authored *Strategic Directions for the Oak Ridges Trail 2009 – 2014*. This will see even more of the trail moved into the Optimum Corridor and additional side trails to connect the main trail to local communities. Implementation will depend on future funding.

ORTA is the lead agency for *THE MORAINE. FOR LIFE. - Working Together for the Oak Ridges Moraine* - a project initially funded by ORMF with the objective of strengthening and increasing the efficiency of the moraine partners: Save the Oak Ridges Moraine, the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust and ourselves. The project, led by Judy Gilchrist as Resource Development Officer, continues thanks to a two-year grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

Annual Meeting. We changed the format on April 16<sup>th</sup> to a Thursday evening event with an opportunity to mingle over finger food and a cash bar prior to the business session and guest speakers – the attendance of over 80 was the highest for several years.

Our Third Adventure Relay on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June, was very efficiently organized by Harold and over 70 volunteers and was greatly enjoyed by 25 teams. Participation and proceeds were increased over previous years and we trust this will provide a base to attract more sponsors in the future. As a lead-in to this event, Harold raised over \$9,000 by means of a sponsored End-to-End Walk – 216 km in nine days; April 24<sup>th</sup> to May 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Farewell to Harold and Linda Sellers. Well over 100 Members and Friends attended a Farewell Party mid-July. Harold continues to keep in touch with us - the big news is that from October 1<sup>st</sup> he has a new position as Trans Canada Trail Regional Coordinator for B.C., Alberta and the Northern Territories.

Future Directions. We have seen advantages of having an office and plan to continue at The Gate House. It appears that we will, at least for the foreseeable future, revert to a volunteer led organization. Until the end of this year, as Interim Executive Director, I'm seeking to facilitate the transition.

## **Outing Club of East York**

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

<http://www.outingclubofeastyork.org>

## **Palmerston Trail Association**

Submitted by Barbara Burrows

Our membership is staying pretty steady at around 30 families. We were able to finish stone dusting the last five km of our trail this year and are pricing barrier gates at this time. We have formed a partnership with the Town of Minto thus increasing our trail usage. The local secondary school uses our White's Junction Trail for their annual Terry Fox Run. Our trail systems were a major contributor to the Town of Minto winning the Communities in Bloom national award in our population category!!

We have held several full moon walks, frog count walks as well as hosting a walking group from our local "Try It" program. We continue to be part of the County of Wellington Green Legacy program and have planted almost 2,000 trees along our trail.

Our two old trestle bridges continue to attract many hikers and bikers. Our local tourism co-ordinator is promoting our trail throughout the area so we are hoping for more positive things to happen. We are fortunate to have many dedicated volunteers in our community. They give generously of their time and money so our association can continue to improve the trail and offer educational opportunities to all.

## **Rideau Trail Association**

Submitted by Ron Hunt

A founding member of Hike Ontario, the RTA's purpose is to preserve and maintain a hiking trail from Kingston to Ottawa. In addition to the main trail, there are a number of side trails which are marked by blue triangles. The total length of cleared and marked trails is 387 kilometres.

[www.rideautrail.org](http://www.rideautrail.org)

Kilometres of Trail<sup>1</sup>: 350

Membership<sup>2</sup>: 967 as of October 2009 (- 7.1%)

Highlights:

- Recruited Marketing & Communications Director and started work on marketing strategy
- Started accepting paid advertising in *The Rideau Trail Newsletter*

- Completed *Trail Quality Task Force Report* and began implementation of recommendations
- Completed trial of electronic version of Newsletter in order to investigate and scope out technical, procedural and user acceptance issues
- Major projects:
  - *Kingston Club*: replaced Marion Webb Boardwalk with steel truss bridge in partnership with Cataraqui Region Conservation Area and Limestone District School Board
  - *Central Club*: replaced long boardwalk on Carroll Property
  - *Ottawa Club*: re-routed the Rideau Trail between Burrit's Rapids and Smiths Falls to connect it directly with Merrickville.

### **Street To Trail Association**

Submitted by Paul Mackle

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

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

Street to Trail began over eight years ago when Paul's appreciation for the psychologically soothing effects of nature and his love of helping people became unified. Paul had been volunteering in shelters and soup-kitchens for many years, building a foundation of trust with the street people of Toronto while becoming familiar with the issues that plagued their living conditions. By definition, people experiencing homelessness are stranded within street life and its milieu of dangers, as well as a constant dependency on others for basic necessities--- for shelter, food, water, medicine and education. Paul witnessed the destitution of their everyday lives, and wondered what would occur if street life were intercepted by a nature outing with those of similar circumstances. Working with what one might refer to as the *vis medicatrix*

*naturae* (the healing power of nature), Paul started taking some of the people he met on hikes to gauge the responses to such an outing. For Paul, the internal and intra-personal changes he observed in their behaviour and character were immediate; the participants started to observe and take in their surroundings, walk with more confidence and interact with one another in more trusting, humorous and dignified ways.

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

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

## **Thames Valley Trail Association**

Submitted by Maureen McGauley

The TVTA offers recreational hiking and cross-country skiing inside and outside the Thames Valley Region, as well as related social gatherings. They also maintain and develop walking and hiking trails in the London area, maintain over 130 kilometres of hiking trails, and promote hikes of varying difficulty from a one hour stroll to a demanding three day hike.

[www.thamesvalleytrail.org](http://www.thamesvalleytrail.org)

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### **Achievements in 2009:**

Our club participated in several community events to promote hiking and outdoor enjoyment; for example, Outdoor Discovery Day, held in the local public library with more than 125 attendees; London's Clean and Green Day where 18 volunteers worked in 3 locations; Gathering on the Green, a community event where over 172 interested people dropped by our display area; and Take a Hike London Day which was held as part of Ontario Hike Week.

We worked with our local health unit as part of the Healthy Living Partnership providing weekend introductory level hikes to the community, advertised in a local publication.

We have joined the In Motion partnership with Tom Friesen as our club representative.

In April, a bridge was relocated after being washed out by high spring waters and a boardwalk was later repaired in the same area. A 16 foot bridge is proposed for fall construction.

A major project was completed in May by our Trail Development team: a 42 foot 2 piece-bridge constructed with help from volunteers from the local high school and their teacher.

6 of our members received Ontario Service Awards including 4 who had completed 20 years of volunteering

A total of 15 new hike leaders were certified this year and 5 people were trained in First Aid.

Several certified hike leaders from the Thames Valley Trail Association completed the recent Safe Hiker Instructor course held in London in October 2009.

We purchased a laptop for club use which will hold presentation material for PR use, maps and trail maintenance information, and GIS co-ordinated data concerning the trail.

Our Annual General Meeting will be held on November 2, 2009

### **Challenges:**

Our average membership of 343 is down from the previous year's 357

We would like to recruit more young members and hope that the Saturday morning, family-oriented urban hikes and dog hikes may result in more young members in 2010.

Dog hikes were introduced in 2009 with some limited success and will continue to be offered. We continue to sell our Trail Guides through local outlets, mostly on consignment. We may begin to ask them to buy the guides outright to reduce the logistical problems involved in tracking the stock and sale of the Guides.

The revamping and improvement of our website to make hike planning, volunteer recruitment, and distribution of the Trekker more efficient continues at a slow pace. We have several open positions on our Board – VP and Social Director. Also, recruiting for our GIS development team is in progress but not yet complete.

In May we had an incident involving lightning on a hike. No major problems or errors were identified. An incident report was completed and a “lessons learned” document circulated to all leaders.

### **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](http://www.tbha.ca)

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

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

# of current board members 14

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

# of guided hikes & organized activities 45

#### **Notable Achievements**

1. Trail Guide (2007) - sales are very good.
2. 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Potluck Dinner/Club Photo Presentation - Annual Meeting – September 14, 2009
3. 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Logo for outdoor clothing.
4. Welsh Mountain Trail - trail maintenance.
5. Canoe Clinic for club members, with the Ontario Recreation Canoe Association.
6. Exploring existing/new trails in the Nipigon area, with our Nipigon volunteers.
7. Our volunteers/members, inviting outing participants back to their home/camp after an outing.
8. [www.tbha.ca](http://www.tbha.ca) sponsored by Thunder Bay Telephone.
9. Hiking Hotline: 624-4271 sponsored by CRC Communications

10. Increased participation in kayak/canoe outings.
11. Mountain bike/hike outings have been successful.
12. Member photos of club outings put on our website.

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

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

### **Voyageur Trail Association**

Submitted by Patrick Capper

The Voyageur Trail is a true wilderness trail in Northern Ontario. A pedestrian trail only--this means that it is made for hiking, backpacking, snowshoeing and bushwhack skiing.

[www.voyageurtrail.ca](http://www.voyageurtrail.ca)

Membership down a little at 173 with 97 of those being in Sault Ste Marie, 50 in Elliot Lake and membership along the rest of the trail is down from 20 to 11 people. Still having trouble filling President's position

Had a significant bequest, but were then informed that the Voyageur Trail was not a legal entity since about 1994! Much to everyone's surprise, especially since that time a large Trillium grant had been given to the association and regular charity filings had been made. No one is sure of the details but at that time a \$25 annual fee was involved and in 1994 the P.O. box was changed and the all too young president of the association died. A \$50 payment has now been paid and the status re-established to satisfy bequest trustees.

One U.S. couple is planning a walk around Lake Superior from April 29th to October 2010 to raise awareness and conduct research about the lake.

A Trans Canada pavilion was dedicated in Sault Ste Marie, and the recently established multiuse Hub trail around the Soo has now had a section paved.

Digital maps of one or more sections of the trail are being sold electronically The member price per map set will be \$10 each or \$30 for all four. Non-members will pay \$15 per map set or \$45 for all four



## **Financial Report**

Submitted by Ron Knight

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

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

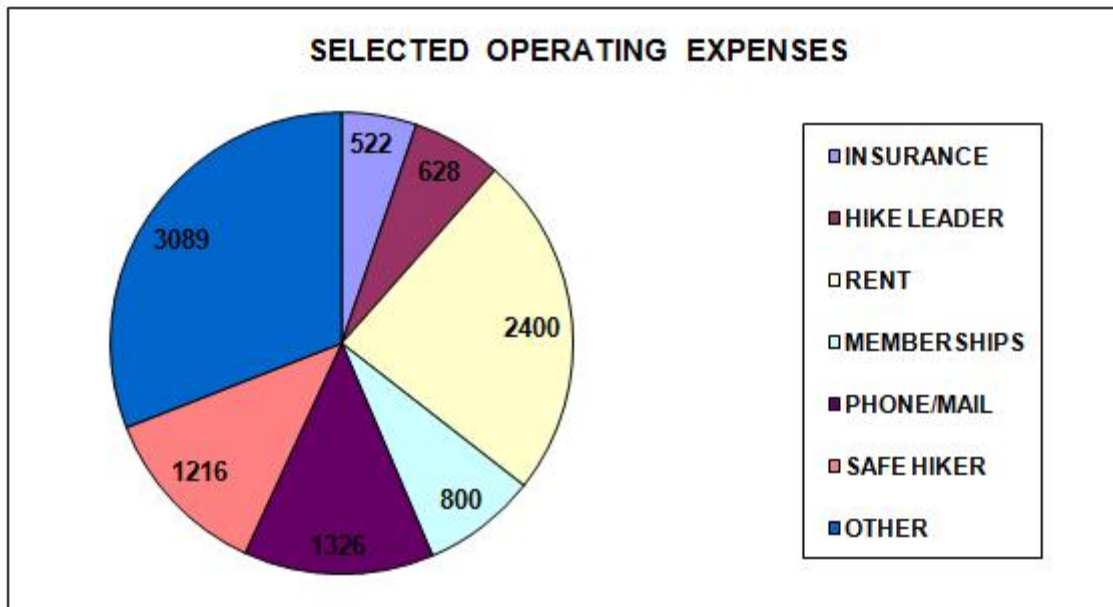
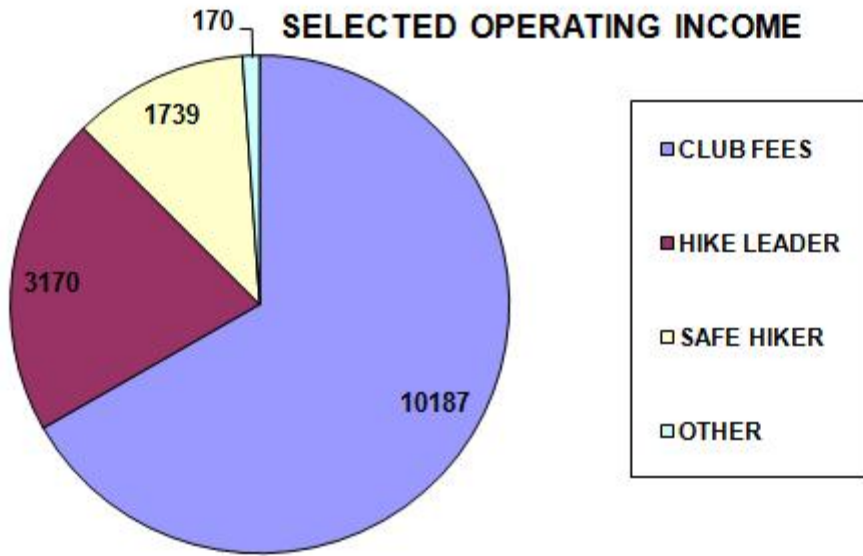
This year's operating income of \$66,321 with expenses of \$56,926 contributed a surplus of \$9,395 to our operating balances.

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

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

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

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



## **Volunteer of the Year Awards**

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

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

### **RECIPIENTS OF THE 2009 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS ARE:**

#### **Pauline Copleston, Grand Valley Trails Association**

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

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

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

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

#### **Ed Dennis, Grand Valley Trails Association**

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

Ed organizes work parties to help clear out dead trees, cut grass and make new trails. In 2008 he helped implement the opening of a new trail through Ruthven Park National Historic Site

and the establishment of the new route behind the Gingerbread House. Along with these two projects the trail across the road from Ruthven was reinstated to the woodlot. Most recently, Ed was responsible for moving the southern terminus of the trail from Rock Point Provincial Park to the mouth of the Grand River thus making the trail more accessible to the public.

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

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

### **Dave Gillians, Bayfield River Valley Trail Association**

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

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

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

## **Friends of Hike Ontario**

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

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

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

### **Friends of Hike Ontario help us:**

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

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

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

## Our Friends

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

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

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

Terri & Jay LeRoux                      Harold Sellers

### **TRAIL BLAZER** (\$2000-\$4999)

Tom Friesen                                  Henry Graupner                                  Mountain Equipment Co-op

### **BUSHWHACKER** (\$800-\$1999)

Todd Bardes

### **NAVIGATOR** (\$250-\$799)

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

### **HIKER** (\$25-\$249)

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

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

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

***-- Edward Abbey***



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