



"The greatest adventure is what lies ahead."

- J.R.R. Tolkien

# Annual Report



2014 - 2015

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

Hike Ontario

**Annual Report 2014-2015**

[www.hikeontario.com](http://www.hikeontario.com)

Trails provide meaningful and satisfying outdoor experiences for many users. These experiences reaffirm a sense of connection with the natural environment and provide opportunities for an appreciation of Ontario's natural heritage. With a trails system that traverses many of Ontario's natural regions, trails play an important role in supporting environmental education and building a public commitment to environmental conservation.

*Active2010: Ontario Trails Strategy, 2005*

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## HIKE ONTARIO GOVERNANCE

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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:**

- Encourage walking for recreation, transportation and health
- Provide courses in introductory safe hiking and hike leadership in both wilderness and non-wilderness settings to people of all ages
- Support and facilitate trail development for walking and hiking throughout Ontario
- Enable good trail maintenance and hiking practices and the enhancement and quality of the walking experience
- Encourage and facilitate the development of trail building hiking clubs in Ontario
- Advocate for a club or clubs when requested or when an initiative is deemed necessary
- Promote education and research into the health benefits and other aspects of recreational walking
- Encourage conservation and appreciation of the natural environment
- 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 Certified Hike Leader, Wilderness Day Hike Leader, and Map & Compass 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 950 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 2014 – 2015***

Tom Friesen	President
VACANT	Vice President
Roma Juneja	Treasurer
Stacey Hodder	Secretary
Frieda Baldwin	Ontario Trails Council Representative
Michael Fleischmann	Hike Canada Representative

### ***Standing Committees 2014-2015***

Lewis Williams	Certification Committee
VACANT	Public Education Committee
Bill Mungall	Issues, Policy & Advocacy Committee
Raymond Soucy	Fundraising Committee
Frieda Baldwin	Planning and Development Committee



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

Karen Hill	Avon Trail
Roger Lewington	Bayfield River Valley Trail
Ron Knight	Bighead River Heritage Association (Trout Hollow Trail)
Robert Humphreys	Bruce Trail Association
Wendy Stevens	Durham Outdoors Club
D.J. Smale	Elgin Hiking Trail Club
Raymond Soucy	Elora Cataract Trailway Association
Bill Gray	Friends of the Trail Inc (Quinte West)
Frieda Baldwin	Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association
Kirsten Spence	Georgian Bay Coast Trail
Charles Whitlock	Grand Valley Trails Association
Mike Curtis	Guelph Hiking Trail Club
Roland Gatti	Humber Valley Heritage Trail Association
Klaus Keunecke	Lambton Shores Nature Trail
Bruce Lamb	Lucan Area Trails Association
Ethel-Mae Seaman	Maitland Trail Association
Peter Schaefer	Oak Ridges Trail Association
Sean Leon	Ottawa Wilderness Adventure Club
Susan Forbes	Palmerston Trail Association Inc
Sharen Yaworski	Rideau Trail Association
Diana Smyth	Rouge Park Trail Club
Laurie Dunbar	Thames Valley Trail Association
Hilda Postenka	Thunder Bay Hiking Association
Carole Blaquiére	Voyageur Trail Association
Raymond Ramshaw	Waterloo 55+ Seniors' Hiking Club

## COMPASS 2015

Hike Ontario is the province's most valuable support resource for hiking and walking groups and users.

### **Strategic Themes**

The strategic plan outlines the strategic goals and objectives that will guide Hike Ontario from 2010 to 2015 and prioritizes them as follows:

1. Build a sustainable organization
2. Promote hiking and walking, and pedestrian trails
3. a. Create value for members and non-members alike  
b. Develop and deliver programs for all stakeholders
4. Develop an effective organization and systems.

### **Products and Services**

Hike Ontario offers the following products and services:

Hike leader certification\* Advocacy

Insurance program\* Annual summit

Risk management program\* Best practices report

Safe hiking program\* Long distance awards

Website\* Young hikers program

*\*Services identified as most important to member associations and clubs*

### **Goals and Objectives**

Compass 2015 goals and objectives are two-tiered:

- i) Achieve short to medium-term goals related to strategic theme No. 1 between 2010 and 2012 (prepares for issues 2, 3a, 3b and 4.
- ii) Develop a road map that addresses all of the strategic themes and provides guidance on where Hike Ontario will be in 2015 and how it will get there.

### **Strategy and Action Plan**

Short-term strategy and goals:

#### **1. BUILD A SUSTAINABLE ORGANIZATION**

Short-term goals:

- Get paid staff
  - Define a job description for the paid staff person
  - Estimate hours and funding requirements
- Focus on improving the delivery of priority services

- Concerted and planned rollout of services
- Improve volunteer development and recognition activities
  - Develop a volunteer manual
  - Develop volunteer-recognition policies
  - Enhance recognition activities.

Long-term strategies and goals:

## **2. PROMOTE HIKING AND WALKING AND PEDESTRIAN TRAILS**

### **3A. CREATE VALUE FOR MEMBERS AND NON-MEMBERS ALIKE**

#### **B. DEVELOP AND DELIVER PROGRAMS FOR ALL STAKEHOLDERS**

## **4. DEVELOP EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION AND SYSTEMS. EXPERIENCE IT...ONE STEP AT A TIME...**



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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Submitted by Tom Friesen

This year has been a time of partnerships and excitement at Hike Ontario. We had some changes to our membership as we did not renew the memberships of a couple of groups that really only wanted our insurance program and added others spanning from the Southwest of the Province to the Northeast.

Our participation in the Mood Walks Project ended very successfully for the over 55 group at their Summit on March 31<sup>st</sup>. Mood Walks begins again with the Youth in Transition project grant that CMHA was begun. This project will end on March 31<sup>st</sup> of 2017. We continued to expand our number of trained instructors for both Safe Hiker and Certified Hike Leader courses. This will help us in the last six months of the Seniors' Hike Initiative to achieve target of Safe Hiker and Certified Hike Leaders trained in order to fulfil the conditions of our own grant which we received from the Sport and Recreation Communities Fund.

We began new partnerships with Ontario Parks and Coleman in the Healthy Parks, Healthy People initiative as well as Conservation Ontario in its Healthy Hikes Program. These programs seek to bring people out of doors to engage in activities that we enjoy and support.

An extremely strong executive team has made progress towards achieving a balanced budget and maintaining a part time staff person in our Program Manager David Rosenblun Bourdieu. His website expertise has helped our website to be more exciting and connect us for programs and information. With the help of Emily Kovacs he has put out monthly newsletters.

A Summit planning committee has been working hard to coordinate our 2015 Summit as part of the Camino Rio de Maitland in the Goderich area with the Maitland Trail Association. Next year's Summit will take place in the city of Perth from September 30<sup>th</sup> until October 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Our trail associations and clubs have given input into a Trails Survey and responded to the input into the new Ontario Trails Act. We prepared strong responses to Bill 100. There is still a great deal to do to get our concerns in front of the government as we seek the support we need to continue to operate our trails and hiking clubs which provide a network of free assessable pedestrian trails for the people of Ontario.

Our strategic planning process identified gaps in our financial processes as the number of Hike Ontario programs and activities has increased. We recruited a new Treasurer and volunteer business advisor, and retained professional accounting and bookkeeping resources. We are now in full compliance with Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) reporting and have a strong budget process in place for 2015-16. The Board and Executive approved changes to our organizational structure to comply with charity rules and best practices. More attention and legal resources will be spent on this into the next year.

At this time we are recruiting for our committees and training programs. Please consider being a Hike Ontario activist. It is a gift that benefits all of the hikers of Ontario.

## STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

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### *Certification Committee*

Submitted by Lewis Williams

This first year of my role as chair has been a year of a review, update and consolidation of many procedures and practices related to the courses that Hike Ontario offers. The goal of the Program Certification Committee is to promote safe and enjoyable hiking in Ontario by facilitating the offering of a wide variety of courses to hike participants, leaders and instructors. This goal is accomplished in partnership with the hiking clubs in this province. Hike Ontario is certainly the go to place for top quality hike certification in Ontario.

The member clubs of Hike Ontario plus our hike instructors leaders, and particularly the Program Certification Steering Cttee, have addressed a wide range of course and program practices and procedures. This report will briefly outline them.

1. Certified Hike Leader renewal- the renewal fee is \$5.00 every 5 years.  
Note: Hike Ontario appreciates the help of hike clubs in the submission of names of leaders (every 5 years) and instructors (annually) needing renewal and recertification. Non-club leaders will renew on their own.
2. Course Fees- Course prices have increased \$10 per course to cover the increases over the past 10 years in administering courses and the new EventBrite online registration program handling charges.
3. Course registration cut off dates- the cut off date depends on each instructor. If an instructor wishes to receive the wallet cards for presentation at the end of the course, names must be submitted 4-5 days prior to the course.
4. Last Minute Registrations- this is permitted but not encouraged out of consideration for instructor preparation. Advanced registration online is the new standard of practice.  
Note: A person is fully registered when they have submitted the registration form with full payment. Cash is not accepted and cheques can be problematic. Credit card and our online registration system is the preferred method of payment and registration..
5. Wallet cards- are awarded to successful course participants. Certificates will be given out only in Safe Hiker courses.
6. Course Participant Cancellation guideline- if a registered participant cancels within 2 days of the start of a course, then an administration fee of \$25 will be charged. The balance can go towards another hiking course. The Chair will consider compassionate, exceptional and unusual circumstances.
7. Early Bird and Youth Course Discounts- were considered but will not be offered.
8. Instructor Annual Recertification- the fee is \$25 and evidence is required of the instructor having taught 2 courses in the last 5 years and having the endorsement of their hiking club or school, in the case of a teacher.

9. Instructor Remuneration- this has been reduced by \$10.00 (to \$165.00 for a course with a minimum of 10 participants) for taxation reasons. The minimum an instructor will receive for a course, based on 6 students, is \$100.00.
10. Courses must have at least 6 participants to run. Cancellation of a course is at the discretion of the Chair in consultation with the instructor.
11. It is recommended that hike leaders and instructors have appropriate current, first aid certification.

#### **Other Developments:**

1. The introduction of the digital version of the Long Distance Hikers Award.
2. The introduction of EventBrite, a data management system for on line course registrations.
3. The creation of a Course Site Location Resource list for Ontario.
4. The revision of a Navigation course to include map, compass and GPS skills. This is a collaborative project between a member hiking club and the Hike Ontario.
5. CHL- Certified Hike Leader course test revision- the test questions have been revised and now there are 20 questions. The test will be located on the Hike Ontario website in the Members-Instructors section.
6. The Hike Ontario website has many resources for hike leaders and instructors.
7. A Hike Ontario Instructor crest has been created and is available for professional display on knapsacks or jackets. Contact our office to buy one.
8. Instructors must submit expense and course evaluation forms within 2 weeks of the end of the course.

#### **Future Directions:**

It is the goal of the Program Certification Committee to increase the number of trained hikers, hike leaders and hike instructors both in the urban and wilderness setting by increasing the number of courses offered in Ontario.

Your ideas about hiking are always welcome. In addition, I'd love to see any excellent hiking photos you've got.

### ***Issues, Policy and Advocacy Committee***

Submitted by Bill Mungall

#### **Consolidated Plan Review (Niagara Escarpment, Oak Ridges Moraine, Greenbelt, Greater Golden Horseshoes Growth Plans)**

The Province bundled up all 4 plans for a required 10 year review (some ahead of schedule) and held some 2 dozen consultation sessions around South-Central Ontario on these plans. Some clubs participated in quite a number of these. The Advocacy Committee reviewed these documents and provided comments to the Province...in particular...

- Advocating that a landowner incentive program be launched to help clubs get more trails off roads, particularly along the Oak Ridges Moraine and the Niagara Escarpment
- That the Escarpment Plan be used and publicized as a spine, connecting to other trail systems and to urban areas, and that these trail linkages within the plan area be secured

- That the Province offer municipalities a grant program that would focus on completing their trail systems, and ending the “trails to nowhere” syndrome seen in many urban communities
- That municipalities be allowed to treat unimproved footpaths as distinct from urban trails, with relaxed environmental planning requirements, and that “Open Space” designations be restored in municipal official plans to give more scope to municipal trail planners.
- That under the Ontario Trails Strategy, that the Province provide grants to assist clubs with the legal, survey and severance costs for registering easement that would secure the trail.

### **Ontario Trails Strategy**

Semi-annual lobbying visits to the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport gave us a heads up that a Trails Act was coming and allowed us to meet some of the newer staff involved in its drafting.

Clubs should be aware that the Strategy, around since 2005, is, off and on, an important source of Provincial funds for trail development, and that it is worthwhile checking with their local MTCS field staffer to see what programs are in place or coming up.

### **Ontario Trails Act**

A first ever Trails Act was introduced in the Ontario Legislature and put out for a 45 day review. The Advocacy committee made a full presentation and discussion on the Act at the May board meeting and sent in comments to the Ministry by the deadline. The Act will likely receive Third Reading and adoption in the House this fall.

Ontario will designate “Trails of Distinction”, will create a voluntary classification system of all trails, and signage standards for these classifications. And an annual report on the implementation of the Ontario Trails Strategy will be issued by the Minister. One small positive is that any incorporated club will be able to register easements to secure a trail, assuming the club has the resources for survey, severance and legal costs.

But in all, there is little in the Act that will change things for hiking clubs dealing with the day to day challenges of managing trails. One disappointment was that our recommendation that the Province introduce a landowner financial incentive (that would have provided an annual \$222,000 in property tax reductions to all private landowners with pedestrian trails) was apparently too rich or perhaps too ahead of its time.

### **Virtual Summit Teleconferences**

As an alternative to holding the annual conference, HO invited all clubs to a series of three teleconferences on topics of wide interest: Club Success Stories; Filling Board Vacancies; and Kids’ Hike Programs.

Discussions were of very high quality, with some excellent input received from participating club reps. Thanks to Jan Hember (GVTA) and DJ Smale (Elgin) for moderating these sessions. Notes taken (by myself) were then sent out by HO to all the clubs.

(In case you missed seeing the record of these events, just pick up a copy of the notes of the discussions at the HO display table.)

### **The Lyme Disease Issue**

HO has recently written the Ontario Minister of Health, advocating that the Province announce a comprehensive Lyme disease strategy in November, as has been called for by Lyme Ontario. The rather alarming stories in the media lately have resulted in farmers, dog owners and hunters all checking for ticks at the end of any outing in woods or fields. It's high time for hikers to be checking, too. But it's also well overdue that Canadian medical establishments and practitioners ramp up to deal with the complexity and gravity of the issues associated with Lyme.

HO will focus on providing specific, practical information to clubs in the coming months and will continue to advocate for improved diagnosis and treatment in this Province.

### **Trailhead 2015 Conference**

In early June at McMaster University, this OTC conference gave HO the opportunity to participate in a number of concurrent sessions. Along with President Tom, I was able to make comment on the Ontario Trails Act, on municipal environmental planning practices as they related to trails in London, and to get a very useful on-on-one update on how the Ontario Snowmobile Association manages insurance and landowner relations. And we heard of the work of the Hamilton-Burlington Trails Council, a novel innovation linking efforts and information among all trail managers in the area.

### ***Fundraising Committee***

Submitted by Raymond Soucy

Last year we applied for and received a grant from the Ontario Government, Ministry of Sports and Recreation's Communities Fund to develop a Seniors' Hike Initiative program.

The goal of this program is to motivate seniors that are 55 + and currently do not walk or hike, improve their physical and mental health. The Seniors' Hike Initiative helps breakdown the barriers to getting started on hiking and walking. At the end of the program, leave a training (Train the Trainer and Certified Hike leaders) and support infrastructure (links to local hiking clubs) that ensures the program can continue beyond the "Seniors Hike Initiative".



The Seniors' Hike Initiative offers hiking courses to older adults and seniors (55 years old or older) in Ontario: "Safe Hikers" program and "Certified Hike Leaders" program, offered once a year each during the two year grant period which trains seniors to hike safely and for those who wish to provide leadership.

- Safe Hikers program (For beginners )
- Certified Hike Leader Training (For experienced hikers). These leaders will lead future hikes.
- Safe Hiker and Certified Hike Leader Trainings (co-taught with established instructors using a mentoring method during the second Safe Hiker and Certified Hike Leader courses offered at each location.)

We have now received two payments from the Ontario Government Ministry of Sports and Recreation's Communities Fund for the Seniors Hike Initiative program. The payment total \$65,200 and is the entire amount of the grant. This money has been earmarked for Senior Hike Initiative only for accounting purposes.

The program is scheduled to continue until March of 2016. Due to several factors including the overwhelming success of the Canadian Mental Health Associations "Mood Walks" program which Hike Ontario helped fulfill, the Seniors' Hike Initiative was slow to get rolling. The program has now built up good momentum. To make sure we achieve the maximum reach with this program, Hike Ontario has inquired with the Ministry of Sports and Recreation's Communities Fund into the possibility of extending the program deadline. We are just at the beginning of this process so have nothing further to report yet.

Hike Ontario helped support Coleman's "National Get Outside Day" initiative on July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015, [getoutsidecanada.com](http://getoutsidecanada.com). Coleman Canada hosted an initial meeting of several interested parties looking for support. This meeting was attended by our President, Tom Friesen and had a positive outcome insuring Hike Ontario's participation. The Fundraising committee help co-ordinate our involvement and mutual support via our respective websites, social media and press coverage.

### ***Public Education Committee***

Submitted by Tom Friesen

This year saw the completion of our new website. A great deal of effort by our Program manager, David Rosenblun Bourdieu assisted by Rav Gupta went into the design and creation of the content management format. David continuously monitors and adjusts the information content and format to optimize its usefulness.

David assisted by Emily Kovacs also issued monthly newsletters to publicize and promote monthly newsletters. Executive written articles and his own contributions provided the content.

Facebook and Twitter feeds were also used to promote partnership initiatives such as the Healthy Parks, Healthy People by Ontario Parks, Healthy Hikes by Conservation Ontario, the Haliburton Hiking Festival and local events by our Hiking Clubs and Trail Associations.

A major focus of the Public Education Committee has always been the planning and coordination of the Annual Summit. This year our Summit in Goderich hosted by the Maitland Trail Association brought a team of local organizers in which I was a team member. We will be giving out volunteer awards to recognize contributions to Hike Ontario and our individual clubs.

An area of Public Education that we would like to explore and expand is the Young Hikers' Program. Unrest in public education and activity in other projects has had this program underused from its potential impact on the youth of Ontario.

Lisa Vaughn assisted us for much of the year as Volunteer Coordinator but needed to return to her home in the Caribbean so this position needs to be filled.

Julia Wolst Belleghem served as our committee chair but needed to step back part way through her term. She continues to be available on the committee and has helped us in placing one of our Hike Ontario Ambassadors at the Hike Haliburton Festival.

### ***Planning and Development Committee***

Submitted by Frieda Baldwin

The planning & development committee has been active in the past year to serve hiking clubs and trail associations across the province of Ontario, and the strides that have been made over the course of the past few years have been continued and extended. The Hike Ontario Insurance and Risk Management Programs' progress, as well as Compass 2020 will be addressed in this report.

The Hike Ontario Insurance Program has been a staple service to Hike Ontario clubs and associations seeking insurance coverage for both general liability as well as director's & officer's insurance. Through these two policies, pedestrian trail organizations are able to protect themselves from the potential liabilities arising from the facilitation of a public hiking trail. This year we did not see an increase in rates from last year. Commercial General Liability insurance was sold to 20 eligible clubs at a rate of \$2.79 per member plus taxes of 8%. Director's & Officer's insurance was sold to 15 eligible clubs at a rate of \$200, taxes included. That represents a slight decrease in cost.

Over the past three years, the insurance program has become more strict in its definitions and expectations of pedestrian trail organizations" and as a result has reduced the overall risk born by the insurance program. This has been done by restricting access to the insurance program to clubs that fit not only Hike Ontario's sanctioning criteria, but also the reasonable expectations of activities carried out by a "pedestrian trail organization". This has been done in order to secure our insurance rates and maintain the ample coverage that our insurance provides. Risk Management should always be considered in its own right, and should be considered seriously by ALL pedestrian trail organizations. It is independent of insurance, and will always remain that

way. Risk Management practices are not designed to simply comply with the bare minimum required by insurance warranties. Instead, they construct a method of conducting a trail organization that provides the following: safety for those using the trail, as well as appropriate and timely reaction in the event of an incident on the trail. This is achieved by training (Safe Hikers, Certified Hike Leaders, and Wilderness Hike Leaders) and education (Hike Ontario's Ten Key Elements of Risk Management for Hiking Clubs and Trail Associations). Hike Ontario's Compass 2020 objectives will see an increase in responsibility for both hiking clubs and trail organizations in the area of active risk management. Trail safety should not be left to the individual hiker.

We have developed a Question and Answer Resource for Insurance that has been placed on the website. This was led by Frieda Baldwin and D.J. Smale who have worked hard to provide insurance options for clubs this past year.

## HIKE ONTARIO MEMBER CLUB REPORTS

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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

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### *Avon Trail*

Submitted by Karen Hill

The Avon Trail started off the year celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> Season. First off was the Launch back in November 2014. Aided by our treasured honorary, life-time members and families of our Founders, we took part in a short hike followed by Fellowship activities in the nearby Hall. Speeches from local dignitaries, and greetings from the Trail Executive were heard by members and interested persons from the community. Our 7<sup>th</sup> edition Guidebook and our History of the Avon Trail, were launched, and have sold remarkably well with both in re-print status.

Our celebrations continued throughout the year. Trees provided with the assistance of a grant from the Maple Leaves Forever program were ordered in the Fall, arriving this spring and planted along the Avon Trail. Our landowners were pleased we planted Native Red Maples. It took a great effort for our members who planted these trees and watered them through the summer dry days.

We also began our every 5 year End to End set of hikes, with an enthusiastic group. Our certified hike leaders led hikes along the Trail from the Spring and into the Fall. With many of the End to Enders new to hiking, appreciation goes to the Trail Monitors and Maintenance Crews for keeping ahead of the weeds in this year of many wind and rain storms. Maps of the trail have been updated, including expected high weed growth areas. Maps such as these, indicate good knowledge of the trail and shows potentially high maintenance areas. This all makes it much easier to assign work crews to trail areas; plus we are able to keep better track of our Landowners when the land changes hands.

Other Special Events for this Anniversary Year included our Ultra Runners taking 28 hours to run through the Trail, our Kids hikes and the Cedar Bush Board Walk completion. There were some struggles for the Maintenance Crew to work through the cedar trees...what with the mud, the bugs and the heavy lifting. Many compliments were heard by the users of this 450 ft board walk. This Board Walk will soon be known as another one of our Gems.

Our last big 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary project will be held in October as part of Hike Ontario's Provincial hiking week, with a Family hike to be held at Camp Bimini which accesses the Avon Trail. We will be offering food and refreshments to the families afterwards.

Our Networking efforts were rewarding after successful talks with the Stratford YMCA, to further reach out to families to take on hiking efforts with their children; the Perth Accessibility Committee for working with us to provide guidance on developing a list of optimal trail sites for various handicapped trail users. We do want to report that efforts to include the Stratford Perth Multicultural group have not been met with cooperation to date. We hope to still continue to offer to lead hikes for this group of New Canadians.

The Trail Members took part in 5 Christmas parades with the new float, as well as the July 1<sup>st</sup> Parade. We would like to thank our Member who hosted Socials, one in Stratford, one west of St Marys and one near Hickson....and to our Chili snow shoe hike. Our Members were entertained at meetings with guests from the Talbot Trail Trust, and by our members who travelled out of the area on hiking expeditions, including Spain, and France. Capping our year was the great show of support from our membership, towards our work at a benefit for one of our Landowners, in their time of need.

Our AGM in November this year will conclude our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year, and what a busy year it has been. Our Membership numbers continue to climb. Our re-designed 40th anniversary white membership cards and licence plate covers, are all over Ontario. And we have increased our affiliation to include more Tourism based organizations. Our New Flyer landed on many store counter tops. We joined Social Media through Meet Up and Facebook. Every effort helps get the word out that we have a Trail going through Oxford and Perth Counties and the Region of Waterloo, connecting the Thames Valley Trail with the Grand Valley Trail and then on to the Bruce Trail. It is an Amazing Feat to have an Interlocking Network of Trails.

This report wouldn't be complete without acknowledging the work of our Board members, for all their efforts; to our Trail Monitors, and Maintenance Crew, and to our Hike Leaders. Tip of our Hat to our Web Master for redesigning the site once again...it takes a patient person to be a web master. To Hike Ontario, for providing guidance and expertise, we include you in our thanks. And to Our Tuesday Ramblers.....our year round hikers....we do enjoy the great outdoors. None of us suffers from Nature Deficient Disorder.

And to the privilege we feel to be able to hike along cropped fields and through bush lands over private property and conservation lands on our footpath style of trail...for this we thank our Landowners. We cherish this privilege.

### ***Bayfield River Valley Trail***

Submitted by Roger Lewington

The BRVTA had a very active year as we continue to move to more programming than construction. We have 10 trained Hike Leaders and organized a series of bimonthly hikes on BRVTA trails as well as other local trails. These have included snow shoeing and cross country

skiing in the winter months. We also had special events, including a Mayor's Levee walk, January Hike with a membership drive, Owl Prowl, Geocaching walk, tree identification etc. We were also pleased to host a walk with the Southwestern Ontario El Camino Pilgrims in July.

Several Special Events were also organized.

- A spring litter walk in the village was very well received. Some 55 volunteers came out on Earth Day to pick up litter in the village.
- sponsorship of the Terry Fox Run in September. The BRVTA has sponsored this event for the past 4 years, rising over \$10,000 for the Terry Fox Foundation.

For several years we have considered several ways to raise funds for the trail. This October 17th, we are having Fall Harvest Dinner and Dance in Bayfield. We will sell 120 tickets and raise approximately \$2,000 for the trail. This appears to be a great annual fundraising venture.

We were also pleased to work with our local telecommunications provider, TCC, as they are producing community interest documentaries for their TV network. They produced a 20 minute documentary, and also a 3 minute video that we use for trail promotion.

As part of the trail's work, we have a tree planting committee "the Bayfield Tree Project" to begin the replanting of village trees as existing mature trees die out. Thousands of dollars and hundreds of trees have been planted over the past few years. This past year, the focus has been on Bayfield's Heritage Main Street.

As part of the trails community environmental involvement, a "Green Cone" food and organics digester blitz" was done to encourage more composting. 100 Green Cones were sold and distributed in the community.

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

Submitted by Ron Knight

► *Information not available at time of printing* ◀

### ***Bruce Trail Conservancy***

Submitted by Robert Humphreys

This is proving to be a busy year, 2015, for the Bruce Trail Conservancy. As well as pursuing our long term mission of protecting a conservation corridor through Southern Ontario, by securing a permanent hiking trail through land acquisition, a significant number of members have attended the Ontario Co-ordinated Land Use Planning Review meetings held across the Province. This review of the Niagara Escarpment Plan, and other Southern Ontario land use plans gave us the opportunity through both an

official submission, expressed opinions and numerous letters, to submit recommendations that will facilitate our land securement work by streamlining the severance, easement, donation, unopened road allowance use, and park dedication processes to name but a few.

So far this year we have achieved through both purchase and donation, the preservation of another 216 acres of the Niagara Escarpment, that have secured another 2.8 kilometres of the Bruce Trail, main trail. This takes us to approximately 52%, so there is still a long way to go. Meanwhile we have also continued to develop and add side trails this year, most notable of which are the 5.5 kilometres added on the Silent Valley property we purchased in the Sydenham section in 2013. As ever, there is always somewhere new to walk on the Bruce Trail!

During the 2015 fiscal year the BTC ran several membership campaigns to attract new members, with significant success. A total of 1,644 new members joined the BTC, although there were a significant number of lapsed members by year end. As of the end of June 2015 (the last month for which numbers are currently available), our latest membership numbers are as follows.

Club	# Memberships
Niagara	69
Iroquoia	2164
Toronto	2780
Caledon Hills	879
Dufferin Hi-Land	351
Blue Mountains	358
Beaver Valley	561
Sydenham	411
Peninsula	679
Member-At-Large (No Club affiliation)	55
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8996</b>

## ***Durham Outdoors Club***

Submitted by Wendy Stevens

Durham Outdoors Club (DOC) is a small non-profit member-driven organization, totally run by volunteers. The type, number and scope of activities are determined by the will of the members. The club sponsors and participates in various activities throughout the year, including, but not limited to: nature hikes, urban/neighbourhood walks, snowshoeing, day canoe trips and weekend canoe/camping trips, cycling day trips, ski days, weekend or snowshoe ski trips, and winter camping.

DOC has an elected executive committee and a number of activity coordinators for the various events. A key strength of DOC is the variety of activities offered by the members, resulting in a broader appeal and relevance to outdoor enthusiasts. There were 141 members at quarter-end. DOC membership now includes family as well as individual membership.

### **The 2015-2016 Executive**

President: Scott Nokelby  
Vice-President: Sue MacMillan

### **The 2015-2016 Event Coordinators**

Canoeing and Camping: Mike Thomas  
Hiking: Mary Perkins

Secretary: Wendy Stevens  
Treasurer: Kaja Batinic  
Membership: Jeannie Shanks  
Website: Janet Hendersen  
Newsletter: Robb Duncan

Walks: Coral Petzoldt  
Biking: Roy Crooks  
Urban Events: Ray Bartodziej

DOC total activities September 2014 to August 2015 were as follows:

- 34 wilderness and urban hikes
- 6 weekend trips
- 1 week-long hiking trip
- 19 bicycle trips
- 11 urban events
- 4 executive committee meeting
- 10 general membership meetings

The newsletter is published 4 times a year at the start of each season of activities. It is available on [durhamoutdoorsclub.ca](http://durhamoutdoorsclub.ca) and includes the list of upcoming events.

Monthly meetings are held on the last Tuesday of each month except December and July, when no meetings are held. These meetings are an opportunity to update members on club business and activities, as well as provide social time to swap stories. Most meetings also feature a guest speaker in a specialized area of interest such as canoeing or mapmaking.

Hikes can be urban or rural, and typically last from 2-4 hours. The length varies by difficulty, weather, and terrain and are run all year. We walk every Wednesday evening from April to August, many Friday mornings, and almost every weekend. We make good use of Durham Region conservation areas and parks, and went as far away as the Finger Lakes in New York.

Bicycle trips happen either Saturday or Sunday during cycling weather, with the length and difficulty increasing each week during the season. This year there was a week-long cycle trip to Ohio.

There is a small but dedicated canoeing/kayaking contingent for day and weekend trips. Weekends are in Provincial Parks and day trips happen all over Southern Ontario within a 2 hour drive from Oshawa.

Winter activities included daytime skiing and shoe shoeing, 1 overnight in yurts, 1 overnight in tents, and 1 overnight in a motel.

Urban events include activities such as trips to museums, historic cemeteries and buildings, theatre, pool, golf and music festivals.

## ***Elgin Hiking Trail Club***

Submitted by Loretta Vaughan

2015 has been a exciting year for us, as we prepare to celebrate our 40th Anniversary. Rain or Shine. We have several end-to-end hikes planned which end with a train ride, special badge and



cake on the 3rd of Oct. A new reroute down the Harbour to Lake Erie will also be officially opened. All events are open to the public; with special invites going to landowners.

A committee to plan much needed update to our guidebooks will take place late fall into the winter months.

A grant was requested and received to update our boardwalk from Green Lane Community Trust. Work will begin after Oct 15 as per Lake Erie Salmon and Trout Club request. They are our neighbour to the south.

Membership is 78, down 10 from last year. We are hoping our 40th celebration will bring increased awareness of our club locally and increase memberships!

Our very dedicated executive has worked hard this past year to improve trail maintenance and risk management issues. Some executive positions remain open.

Overall, a very successful year. Our AGM had the largest attendance ever and we had 22 hikers out recently at a "Bluemoon Hike".

## ***Elora Cataract Trailway Association***

Submitted by Raymond Soucy

The Elora Cataract Trailway is a 47-km (29-mile) linear trail that links parks, watersheds and Communities in south-central Ontario. The trail is routed along the abandoned railway corridor of the 1879 Credit Valley Railway and runs from Elora to Cataract, passing through the Communities of Elora, Fergus, Belwood, Orton, Hillsburgh, Erin and Cataract. From there users can access the Forks of the Credit Provincial Park and join up to the Bruce Trail.

The Elora Cataract Trailway Association (ECTA) focuses on Promoting, Improving and Protecting the Elora Cataract Trailway. Below is a partial list of activities carried out in the past year.

The ECTA along with five other organizations donated money to the Grand River Conservation Authorities' Osprey Nest Webcam initiative. The nest is located at the Shand Dam in Belwood. The camera was installed in March and the Osprey arrived on April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015. The parents have been named Bella and Woody (for Belwood). Two chicks hatch and GRCA held a contest to help name the chicks. On July 3<sup>rd</sup> the GRCA announced the chick would be named Fergus and Welley. You can watch the webcam by going to ***grandriver.ca*** and clicking on the "Live Osprey Cam" picture.

The ECTA with great support from Centre Wellington Hydro and the GRCA re-signed the route through Fergus from Beatty Line to Gartshore Street. Since the former CPR right-of-way was never purchased through Fergus, it can make for a confusing route. Further tweaking and signage will be installed to make it even easier for trail users to find their way in Fergus.

The ECTA spend just over \$4,500 this year on new signage to be installed on all gates along the ECT's GRCA section of the trail. This includes 39 - 12" x 18" location/directional signs to answer the question, what road crossing am I and/or how far to the next major location? Each gate will also have an 8" x 80" "ELORA CATARACT TRAILWAY" sign installed. A total of 42 of these larger signs are being installed. These will help user's locate the trail and improve the overall branding of the ECT. A few years ago the trail received new KM markers along the entire 47KM of the trail.

We now have three trail counters installed to help gather more accurate usage data on the trail. We are entering the third year of collecting data on the first two counters and are now be able to compare year over year usage on our third counter. In the long run, the data will provide information on trail usage patterns such as, by season, month, days of the week etc. Properly understanding how the trail is being used is an important step in promoting and improving the Trailway.

The Elora Cataract Trailway now joins the Trans-Canada Trail to the west via the new Cottontail Road Trail from Elora to the Kissing Bridge Trail.

Our two 8' x 2' banners continue to be placed at various points along the trail for a week or two at a time at each location. The banners provide the ECTA with exposure to trail users and help increase awareness and memberships.

The 2015 AGM was held on Sunday March 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Victoria Park Senior Centre in Fergus. Our Guest speaker this year was Doug Cerson, Director for the Charitable Foundation and Oversight Committee created to complete the 127KM Guelph to Goderich Rail Trail or better known as G2G. It was followed by a lively Q&A. The 2016 AGM is set for March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Watch our website ([trailway.org](http://trailway.org)) for more details.

We are always on the lookout for individuals who would be interested in making a difference by joining our board. Anyone interested for more details can email [info@trailway.org](mailto:info@trailway.org)

### ***Friends of the Trail (Quinte West)***

Submitted by Bill Gray

This year has seen us celebrate 11 years as Trail developer and marked the end of our construction phases. We have accomplished what we set out to do and have started a re-evaluation of our business plan as we assess our options for the future of the Lower Trent Trail. The daily use of the LTT has continued to increase as word spreads about this wonderful no cost recreational facility.

The once voiced fear of residents that the Trail development would just produce an unattractive 17 km strip of gravel has been set to rest as mother nature with a little help from our members has created an endless variety of vistas hosting native trees and plants, wildlife and a sense of calm. The Trail is over seventy percent shaded and this fact alone draws many users during the hot summer days. We have added another 4 benches at strategic points along the trail, perhaps a sign of the increasing age of our membership, and will continue to add amenities such as distance markers as we enter our fall maintenance period.

The membership remains steady although it is getting increasingly more difficult to recruit individuals for the various board positions, a universal problem and one we will consider during the upgrade of our business plan.

A good year to be the in Trail business.

### ***Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association***

Submitted by Frieda Baldwin

The nine member clubs of the Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association maintain the 500 kilometre long Ganaraska Hiking Trail from Port Hope on Lake Ontario to the Bruce Trail near Collingwood, with side trails to Wasaga Beach and Midland.

It should be noted that the Ganaraska Hiking Trail is a "minimum impact trail" and contains very few man-made structures. The Wilderness section through the Queen Elizabeth II Wildlands (north-east of Orillia) is on the Pre-Cambrian shield and very rugged and therefore very challenging.

The Association is run by a Board of Volunteers drawn from the member clubs. Each club runs scheduled recreational hiking programmes in their local area.

Membership in the Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association is \$25 for a family, per year. The Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association currently has 495 paid memberships at of August 31, 2015. Members receive a membership card, which is renewable yearly, a GHTA crest, and *The Ganaraska News*, published three times per year, which gives details of planned events and hikes, club news, interesting articles and general information.

The Ganaraska Map Book is available for purchase at a cost of \$25 + shipping (non-member price).

Many of the clubs also organize weekly bike or canoe/kayak events, which has increased the premium of our general liability insurance, which the GHTA obtains through Ontario Nature. Cost of CGL insurance \$ 2200/year.

The Annual General Meeting of the GHTA is scheduled for October 31, 2015 in Orillia.

For more information on the Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association (such as schedules, photo gallery, merchandise, etc.) check ***ganaraska-hiking-trail.ca***.

## ***Georgian Bay Coast Trail***

Submitted by Kirsten Spence

We continued to build trail in 2014!

Development at Point Grondine continued - This section will have a day and an overnight loop when complete. Trail will be fully open in 2015 - ***www.grondinepark.com*** for more information.

## **GBCT Trails Symposium**

There was a fantastic turnout at the Trails Symposium we co-hosted with the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve yesterday at Canadore College West Parry Sound Campus. A big “thank you” goes out to Bruce County Tourism, Frontenac Arch Biosphere, Manitoulin Island Cycling Advocates and Ontario Trails Council for their inspiring presentations as well as the Ministry of Tourism Culture and Sport without which this event would have not been possible! Thank you to 60+ participants for engaging in some productive dialogue. Stay tuned for resources and updates!

## **WATER SPYDERS**

The Water Spyder is a piece of mobile infrastructure. It allows users to get from one side of a water body to the other by using a hand powered crank. The Water Spyder can hold multiple people and gear or can be used by one person alone making it ideal for many situations. They will be used on the trail as an affordable and effective way to cross inlets, rivers, and lakes.

**Expenditures \$71,916**

**Revenues \$72,225.85**

## ***Grand Valley Trails Association***

Submitted by Charles Whitlock

The Grand Valley Trails Association (GVTA), now in its 43rd year, maintains a 280-kilometer trail from the mouth of Lake Erie to the Town of Alton near Orangeville. The footpath is marked by white and/or blue blazes and generally follows the waters of the Grand River. It is through the dedication and support of many volunteers that our association maintains this continuous path.

Like most other Hike Ontario member clubs, a Board of Directors operates the association. Currently, most of the key positions are filled. From a financial perspective the association is solvent and a detailed 2015/2016 budget was prepared and approved by the board. The budget was divided into categories and potential expenditures were identified.

Our membership as of July 2015 stands at 262. The majority of our members reside within the larger urban centers of Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo. This urban concentration provides the needed resources such as trail captains to maintain the northern sections of the trail. Regretfully, membership is sparse in our southern clubs resulting in an absence of trail captains. GVTA is seeking ways and reaching out to volunteer groups/organizations that could assist in trimming, repairing, replacing and restoring areas that have fallen in disrepair.

GVTA has embarked on the development of a new recruitment strategy to attract more Trail Captains and other volunteers throughout our trail.

The GVTA has had a good summer in regards to landowner relations. In the last few months the GVTA has renewed one and added one new landowner to the Hike Ontario insurance program and provided the endorsement certificate. Aside from this, there have been no serious concerns by GVTA landowners. The GVTA is committed to responding to landowner concerns and resolving such concerns in a timely and effective manner.

In late June, six members of the Brant Death Racers Running Club successfully completed a south-to-north run of the entire Grand Valley Trail. Beginning at the trailhead on the shore of Lake Erie, each team member ran two legs of 20-30km each, tagging the subsequent runner in relay fashion at predetermined locations along the way. While physical preparation was key for completion, so too was the logistical preparation. The Brant Death Racers spent months studying the GVT guidebook and obtaining advice from GVT Board members in order to plan for the event. The run was completed in 26 hours and 42 minutes.

The new edition of the GVTA guidebook, edition 7 is now released. Thanks to the dedication of Jaime Hember and Nick Kuret and many other volunteers this 16 colour edition is now available.

GVTA extends to Hike Ontario a big thank you for its on-going assistance in supporting hiking trails and associations. HO is a grand supporter to the GVTA and it is appreciated.

GVTA also extends best wishes to the Maitland Trail Association as they celebrate their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

## ***Guelph Hiking Trail Club***

Submitted by Mike Curtis

The Guelph Hiking Trail Club finished our year with approximately two hundred members, comprised of individuals or families. Our three main trails, the *Guelph Radial Line Trail*, the *Speed River Trail*, the *Kissing Bridge Trailway*, and their side trails are in good condition and are well used by our members and members of the general public.

As well as our usual hiking schedule, we also had special hikes this year, including our popular kids' hikes, a bridge to bridge hike and a magnificent magnolia bike ride! Our trek and tell shows, winter party and summer solstice party were popular with our members.

We very much appreciated other Hike Ontario clubs supporting last year's fortieth annual general meeting of Hike Ontario, in Guelph, *Hike on Speed*.

Our club received a Watershed Award from the Grand Valley Conservation Authority for our work in developing and maintaining trails and promoting outdoor activities in the watershed.

Once again, we participated in Trails Open in the Hanlon Creek area of Guelph and had over a hundred people participate in a short interpretive walk.

We look forward to assisting the G to G group with its trail development and a link of the Kissing Bridge Trailway, from Millbank to Goderich.

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

Submitted by Roland Gatti

### **Membership**

Total family memberships of the Kleinburg and Bolton Chapters of the HVHTA remained constant from last year at 98 member families. We count the full family as one membership so in actual fact we have a total head count of about 150 people.

### **Planned Hikes**

In the last 12 months we led 14 weekend hikes and 2 midweek hikes. The midweek hike is a recent addition to our planned schedule, attempting to offer hiking opportunities to retired persons or those people who have other priorities on weekends. We have included in this years

schedule night hikes to take place late autumn after the time schedule reverts to standard time giving us darkness at an earlier time. From our initial feedback we expect the night hikes to very popular.

### **Trail Maintenance**

Our trails are in better shape now than ever. Twice annually our volunteers cut the tall grasses on the meadow sections of our trails with an industrial model grass trimmer which our club purchased three years ago. The open meadows represent about one third of our trails with the remainder going through forested areas which have little or no underbrush. Over the past five years I have seen increased usage on our trails slowing down the vegetation on the trail.

### **Trails Development**

We have been developing a plan for more trails within the Nashville Conservation Reserve for 3 years with the Toronto Region Conservation Association and now the plan has come to fruition. The first new trail will be added this September, with a construction ceremony taking place September 19. The full project will take 3 years to complete, including 4 bridges crossing the Humber River.

### **Environmental Concerns**

Over the past 3 years we have been able stop unauthorized use of our trails by off road motorcycles and ATVs which were damaging the trails by grinding up the loose earth, through the addition of immovable barriers and stronger fences. The largest future concern is the planned east-west highway (413) that will cross the Humber Valley between Kleinburg and Nobleton, scheduled to be completed in 2013. We now have the assistance of Environmental Defence, an organization committed to preserving the greenbelt, in order to stop the construction of this highway, or to reroute the highway elsewhere.

## ***Lambton Shores Nature Trails***

Submitted by Klaus Keunecke

LSNT now maintains 30 km of hiking trails on some 1200 acres of the environmentally most sensitive forested dune lands & wetlands in Lambton Shores and Vicinity beyond the boundaries of our treasured Pinery Provincial Park.

The highlights of 2015 include the building of a wheelchair-accessible lookout deck in a Conservation Area on the Ausable River near Port Franks, an extensive upgrade of the 4.5 km 'Mystery Falls Trail' in the Ausable River Valley near Arkona, being honoured with Carolinian Canada's 2015 Conservation Award (Group Category) and revamping our website (lsntblazers.com) – have a look...

## ***Lucan Area Trails Association***

Submitted by Bruce Lamb

### **Trail Inventory - Start of 2014**

We currently have a total of 2 km of trails in addition to approximately 3 km of trails previously in existence and maintained by a private landowner.

### **Communications**

In addition to the website [www.LucanTrails.ca](http://www.LucanTrails.ca), the Association has a Facebook page at [www.Facebook.com/LucanTrails](http://www.Facebook.com/LucanTrails) with 131 people who have "liked" the page thus far.

### **Financial**

The initial funding for this project was provided by the Lucan District Lions Club and we know that they are supportive of the initiative.

We still have approximately \$2,900 of the initial \$10,000 donated by the Lions in the bank. The Lions have committed an additional \$10,000 towards trail building and improvements - with the potential for more if justification exists.

### **Activities for 2014**

We have identified two trails inside the town of Lucan that we hope to complete this year: The Elm Street Park trail (180 m.) and The Benn Drain trail (600 m.). We have verbal approval from the town and a local land developer, respectively, to proceed with these trails and we are currently getting quotations from local contractors to complete the work. The Lucan District Lions Club has agreed to fund the new trail building projects.

The biggest on-going challenge has been finding the time to move the projects forward. Fortunately, a Lions member who is retired has stepped up to provide implementation support.

We have installed a deer-cam on one of the trails to gauge the use of our trails - both by people and wildlife.

## ***Maitland Trail Association***

Submitted by Ethel-Mae Seaman

### **Current Membership Trends:**

There are currently 164 paid memberships consisting of 79 individual memberships and 85 family memberships. There are also 80 complementary memberships.

### **Activities and Successes:**

**MTA held two Healthy Parks, Healthy People Hikes at Point Farms on July 17<sup>th</sup>.** The earlier hike was attended by a group that meets each Friday regardless, however, the second hike was very poorly attended due to heavy rain. Also, unfortunately, there were no participants from the people camping at the park.



**The 2015 El Camino Maitland plus Hike Ontario Summit Meeting** is being held on September 26 and 27, 2015. We are expecting upwards of 200 people to attend. Registration at the time of writing this report is 165. The Hike Ontario AGM will be held prior to dinner at the Knights of Columbus Building in Goderich – the same building as the Saturday night El Camino dinner will be in. Hike Ontario Representatives attending the AGM will have appetizers available at the meeting while the remainder of the hikers will be served elsewhere. Volunteers continue to work on the planning of this event.

**Port to Point Trail:** MTA continues to support the P2P trail initiative. There will be a hike led by Con Melady (519-524-8730) from the Goderich to Auburn Rail Trail (GART) to Point Farms with a breakfast scheduled at “Flippin Eggs” scheduled for Saturday October 17, at 8 a.m.

**The Bad Thing:** On Saturday October 31, MTA will host a long distance runners race where runners will complete 50 k or 25 k options in one day, ***racethebadthing.com***. The Bad Thing is named for a challenging part of the Maitland Trail (see Virtual Hike Slide Show)

**The New Trail Guide:** As mentioned in the May report; MTA has a brand new Trail Guide, Third Edition, completed in time to celebrate our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The Guide will be on sale at the El Camino Registration Area.

### **CURRENT CHALLENGES**

Libro Credit Union has contributed \$750 of support for this year’s El Camino and Hike Ontario has moved to support the event with up to \$1000 as needed to defer extra costs.

There are ongoing drainage issues on the GART (the Goderich section of the Guelph to Goderich (G2G Trail) which are believed to be due to drainage from adjacent farms. MTA will apply for a small grant from Maitland Valley Clear Water Project to deal with this problem as well as a secondary beaver problem.

Trails are will maintained and in good shape for the upcoming El Camino event.

### ***Oak Ridges Trail Association***

Submitted by Peter Schaefer

We held our Annual General Meeting on April 16, 2015 in King City. About 90 members attended. Though we had three “retirements” from our Board, only one new Board Member was nominated and elected, leaving us with a slate of ten.

This has been a special year for us as ORTA and the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) entered into agreements allowing ORTA to lead hikes on several NCC properties. The first of these was the Hazel Bird Nature Reserve. This property is located south of Rice Lake off the north side of the ORMT on Beaver Meadow Rd. ORTA participated in designing a 4.5km loop side trail to allow the public to enjoy the spectacular lookout and walk this special property, home to a variety of threatened flora and fauna. ORTA hike leaders have been granted special permission to lead hikes on several other NCC properties, including Happy Valley and Love

Mountain in King Township, in order to share the natural wonders with our members and the public, while informing them of the sensitivity of the flora and fauna in these areas. ORTA leaders will keep to special trails, monitor trail use for NCC and make sure that all dogs are on leash to avoid disturbing ground nesting birds and breeding amphibians. ORTA is pleased to be able to assist the Nature Conservancy with their conservation efforts in Ontario and across Canada.

A major reroute of the western trailhead of the Oak Ridges Moraine Trail has been finalized. It is a result of a tri-partite negotiation among the Oak Ridges Trail Association, the Bruce Trail Conservancy and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. This reroute westerly from the Palgrave Forest and Wildlife Area via the former Palgrave Side Trail of the BTA will connect our two major trails on a route to the Glen Haffy C.A. that will avoid many kilometres of road while passing through spectacular forest sections managed by the TRCA. TRCA will be helping us in the installation of a new kiosk at the trailhead. BTA will be assisting us in the map design as it includes both trails. We agreed to leave the existing kiosk from the previous trailhead north of Hwy 9 for their use. This improvement to the western end of our trail will make it much more inviting for ORTA hikers to make the trip.

Our 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Adventure Relay was held on June 13, 2015. We had 32 participating teams, almost all of them back from last year. There were again about 120 enthusiastic ORTA volunteers at the 14 check points and along the 160 km route, cheering on the competitors and assisting them and their groupies. The event was a modest financial success from the entry fees and sponsorships.

Our membership stayed at around 615 as at year-end 2014, the same as in 2013. With changes during the course of the year, the number is fluctuating around 600.

Our group hike statistics for 2014:

371 hikes, 4192 hikers, 37,349 km hiked (average: 8.9 km, 2010: 10.5 km...we are getting older). While we have 50 certified hike leaders, only 29 have provided active support. Many hike leaders will be dropped during 2015 from this roster.

### ***Ottawa Wilderness Adventure Club***

Submitted by Sean Leon

The Ottawa Wilderness Adventure Club is a member-driven, non-profit group in its inaugural year as a group and with Hike Ontario. Our group's site is hosted on the Meetup platform, this allows us to more easily recruit members and volunteers.

Our group activities are generally limited to hikes, kayaking, biking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing.

**Membership Total:** 61

### **Issues**

Being a new group and new to Hike Ontario we are slowly building the club. Having new members apply for membership has not been an issue, however we need to setup a system in the future to collect the membership fee easily online.

### ***Palmerston Trail Association***

Submitted by Susan Forbes

All our members and non members love our trail. We hear comments how much they appreciate it and that makes it all worthwhile. A great summer, with lots of bicycles and walkers on the trail.

We received a gift of \$1000.00 to purchase benches a couple of years ago and we had them delivered and set on the trail just this week

We also were blessed with lots of mosquitoes. Big ones! We were very pleased to see that our memorial trees we planted are thriving. So far, so good.

Our fundraising in July, selling hotdogs, went well. We added \$855.27.00 to our coffers.

This spring, vandals worked very hard to throw/push our railings on the Durham Sub trestle bridge over. They left one side hanging and one side was in the water. With the help of a big tractor and strong men we rectified the situation and all is good as new.

We have stoop and scoop signs on the trail. Some wonderful dog owners do this action and then they leave the bags on the trail or they think that they can throw them over a fence, out of view. I guess they forget that people who live over the fence have to take care of these packages. This is frustrating.

We think we have a true treasure with our trail. Just steps from town, easy access. A great place to enjoy a quiet leisurely walk or a bicycle ride away from traffic.

Happy Trails to You!

## ***Rideau Trail Association***

Submitted by Sharen Yaworski

### **AGM and New Marketing and Communications:**

Our 44 AGM was held in June and in lieu of having a current president, it was reported that we continued to have regular board meetings and we are actively attempting to recruit a President. All other positions are filled and we actually acquired a new Marketing and communications director in April.

Paul Gallipeau comes to RTA with experience and energy to take on this role. He has been working with Parks Canada since 2010, he is bilingual , and award winning photographer. Paul's vision was to expose RTA to more people and make RTA more inviting and one way was to expose us in social media to capture new members.

Paul reported at our July board meeting that RTA increased exposure on social media has resulted in a 31% increase in LIKES on Facebook and 63% increase in follows on twitter. He is also monitoring Instagram and encouraging people to tag photos on the RT with #RideauTrail. Paul is also working with an Ottawa based creating marketing agency on a new user friendly and mobile responsive Website. This will be the first web redesign since 2007. We plan to recruit high school and university students as volunteers to support maintenance of the RTA's renewed online presence. As of August 2015 the number of new RTA members who heard about the Rideau Trail thru the internet was up 300% compared all of 2013.

Our news letter has been revamped over the past year and we are now going into our second year after a trial year of incorporating 4 pages of pictures that are submitted from members. Members were happy with this change, which are a upgrade but actually was not a costly upgrade.

Our Association has a phone which is carried by a knowledgeable member and calls to him have increased considerably this year with people inquiring about doing end to end hikes.

We had a retired military man who hiked from Kingston to Ottawa in 11 days to raise money for "Boots for PUPs". We started him off from Kingston greeted him in Perth and a Welcomed him into Ottawa.

**Membership:** seems to be stable at this point, hovering around 775 there are some new members and some losses. We have a solid core of hikers of which some are hike leaders and maintainers, executive as well as volunteers for other social activities. Membership is always a challenge and with our increased exposure on social media and written articles we will see more new members.

Our Maintainers take pride in keeping all 330 kms of the trail safe. Each of the three clubs have their own maintainers who work with landowners cooperatively.

Our Hiking program at all three clubs remains very strong with hikes every weekend as well as early evening walks as well.

Our winter hiking is still a big feature for the past 12 yrs...hiking occurs in two weekends in Jan and two in Feb. and they hike 10-15 km daily depending on conditions.

### ***Thames Valley Trail Association***

Submitted by Ruth Hoch

Our membership is at an all time high of 545, up from 420 a year ago , and up from the average for many years of 350. We hope the interest in hiking continues.

This has been a busy year for our trail maintenance workers. In addition to the usual maintenance activities, our team has replaced 2 bridges and replaced the stairs at Komoka park. The chain saw team has been active dealing with fallen trees. We are in the process of rerouting the trail in the north end, due to a change of landowners. The current owner does not wish to have the trail on his property.

All of our hikes have been well attended, Tuesday and Thursday Ramblers and Saturday morning walks averaging 40-50 hikers, Moderate Mondays averaging 10-15, and Wednesday evening (summer) and weekend walks advertised through Meetup averaging about 40. We are just completing and end to end that started in April on alternate Sundays. The final hike is Oct 4 and there are about 20 participants. Tom Friesen is again offering his annual end to end hike the first week of October to celebrate Ontario Hiking Week.

We have a new membership director who is working hard to deal with the increased membership. Our president and two of our board members are working with 2 companies to create a new website. This is long overdue and they have spent many hours researching and now working with the new website companies. They hope to have the new website up and running in about 6 months. Kudos to Judy, Wayne and Mike for their hard work on this project.

Three members of the board are retiring this fall. We are looking to replace them.

We still do not have a vice president. Our current president's term ends next fall.

### ***Thunder Bay Hiking Association***

Submitted by Hilda Postenka

Activity over the past year has continued to be strong for the Thunder Bay Hiking Association. Since instituting our Facebook page last year, we are now up to 660 likes, and postings of

reminders for upcoming hikes are very popular. Since our hike schedules come out quarterly, in addition to the information provided on our website members appreciate the timely reminders and information about upcoming hikes that we are able to provide on Facebook.

Over the past year, we experienced a jump in membership and increased numbers of hikers coming out on our hikes. Our memberships increased from 142 to 163, most of which were individual, but a few were family. Participation in outings also increased. For years the average turnout was 10 to 12 members per event, but this year many hikes topped 20 participants! This year 77 outings were scheduled, of which very few had to be cancelled due to poor weather. 48 were hikes, 3 were maintenance hikes, 17 were hike/snowshoe, 3 were ski/snowshoe, 4 were paddle, and 2 were bike.

Our club strives to vary the hikes we lead on the many different trails in and around the city of Thunder Bay, the north shore of Lake Superior, and northern Minnesota. We try to strike a balance between leading hikes on our favourite trails with doing those on less familiar ones. Through mentoring, our newer Hike Leaders expand the repertoire of hikes they are comfortable leading, and our more experienced Hike Leaders are always on the lookout for other areas to explore. We offer hikes at each difficulty level every season, although the majority of our hikes are at the intermediate level. Most weekends we are able to offer an easier hike one day and a more difficult one the other.

We are thankful for the support of Hike Ontario in obtaining insurance coverage for our club, and continue to look forward this upcoming year to their assistance in certifying more of our Hike Leaders.

For more information, access our website at [tbha.ca](http://tbha.ca), or check out our Facebook page “Thunder Bay Hiking Association”.

### ***Voyageur Trail Association***

Submitted by Carole Blaquiere

Since the end of the 40<sup>th</sup> celebration year, things have been quietly moving ahead. Over the past year we have had many hikes and activities to encourage people to use the trail. Interest continues along the shores of Superior to renew existing trails and to create new opportunities. We stand to have a world class trail to attract hikers from all over.

Our challenges remain the same in that we have few volunteers for such a long trail. This makes maintenance a challenge throughout its length. Currently we are looking for volunteers on the board as well as on the trail. Our treasurer is stepping down and others have indicated that they would step down if they could find a replacement.

We had a lackluster maintenance week in the spring, mostly due to poor weather and lack of help to organize but we were able to get a problem section worked on and finished up the week with a potluck supper. We continue to work on our strategic planning survey although the momentum has slowed over the summer months. Membership continues to hold steady whereas our social media pages continue to gain followers.

### ***Waterloo 55+ Seniors' Hiking Club***

Submitted by Raymond & Liz Ramshaw

This club has been run by two coordinators (Raymond and Liz Ramshaw) for the last nine years. The program has had an unchanging format of providing a 10-14km hike once a week throughout the year. Occasionally there are extra hikes depending on local festivities such as The Maple Syrup Festival in Elmira, The Paris Butterfly Festival and the Cambridge Summer Festival. The hike locations are usually in Waterloo Region. Only one hike was cancelled due to inclement weather. Social activities after hikes are strongly encouraged and well supported.

We do not create trails or maintain trails. We use existing trails and have about 90 tracks on record.

The procedures followed for all hikes are similar to that which HFholidays uses. These are associated with safety, liability, risk management etc. HF is one of the largest hiking organizations in the world and operates worldwide. Our club's coordinators are members of HF and each of them has over 80 weeks of experience hiking with HF over the last 19 years. Most of the procedures followed by HF can be read in their brochure (see [hfholidays.co.uk](http://hfholidays.co.uk) or email Teachers' Travel at [info@teacherstravel.com](mailto:info@teacherstravel.com)).

The number of club members is still capped at 50 and there is usually a small waiting list. There are four names on the waiting list at this moment. Members pay a small subscription, enough to pay for membership of Hike Ontario and Hike Ontario's insurance plan. This year's subscription is \$10 p.p.

Hike participation this year was good. The average attendance was 14 (max. 34, min. 7).

One persistent challenge, that the club has, is to train hike leaders. We have 5 leaders, but it is not easy to increase this number. Some members do not like to use a GPS and this device is at the centre of designing new tracks and leading existing hikes. Every leader and back marker carries GPSs with the track of the day loaded. Most of our members prefer to be led. We encourage members to use a spare GPS and hike with the leader of the day. This is still working well.

Last year we have formalized a risk management plan that has been sent to Hike Ontario.

One problem we have is that the president of Hike Ontario has the expectation of our club's participation in committee meetings. In general it is not easy to find any of our seniors with such interests. However, Bob Seftel (one of our leaders) has offered to participate in Hike Ontario meetings that have a relevance to our members and our club. If Hike Ontario throws us out, then Waterloo 55+ Seniors' Hiking Club will be dissolved. We have consulted a lawyer and an insurance broker who say it is too risky for the club to be without insurance.



## ONTARIO TRAILS COUNCIL REPORT

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Hike Ontario is a member of the Ontario Trails Council. This organization represents the trails community which has three sectors green (non-motorized – pedestrian, equestrian, mountain bike), gold (motorized – ATVs, snowmobiles, dirt bikes, etc.) and blue (portage trails). Some Trail Associations belong as well and the Ontario Trails Council encourages this as they reached the end period for their Trillium Grant and this has created serious shrinkage in their revenue resulting in a downsizing of their operations. They have tried to respond by offering courses but registration numbers to date have been less than was hoped for. Patrick Connor, their executive director, is now working on a half time basis and operations are somewhat curtailed due to limited finances.

Patrick has worked tirelessly to promote the O.T.C. and partnered with projects that will keep it viable. If your trail association or hiking club has extra revenue (from cost savings in insurance or from running Hike Ontario courses) you may wish to support the O.T.C.

The O.T.C. was a partner in presenting to the government in the hearings of last year and their goals are generally similar to ours to create and maintain sustainable trail systems across the province. Since they represent other trail users which have organizations providing professional staff, we need to advocate within this group to ensure fair time for pedestrian trail concerns.

The Ontario Trails Council will have their annual conference at McMaster University in June of 2016.

We are pleased that Bill Mungall will represent us with the OTC over the coming year. We thank Frieda Baldwin for her efforts in representing us over the last few years.

### Notice to Reader

On the basis of information provided by the management, we have compiled the financial position of **Hike Ontario as at 30 June 2015** and the statements of operation and changes in fund balances for the year then ended.

We have not performed an audit or a review engagement in respect of these financial statements, accordingly, we express no assurance thereon.

Readers are cautioned that these statements may not be appropriate for their purposes.

Date: 18 September 2015

Ingersoll, Ontario

Signed: RP Hamilton  
Registered Professional Accountant

*Richard E. Hamilton & Associates Accounting Inc.  
The Society of Professional Accountants of Canada  
99 Thames Street N.- Unit B  
P.O. Box 364  
Ingersoll, Ontario  
N5C 3C6  
519-485-1265*

**Unaudited - see Notice to Reader dated 31 August 2015**

**Hike Ontario**  
**Statement of Operations and changes in Fund Balances**  
(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)  
**Year ended 30 June 2015**

	<b>General Fund \$</b>	<b>Programs</b>	<b>Administration</b>	<b>Senior Hike Fund</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>Receipts</b>					
Retail Sales	\$ 150	\$ -	\$ 150	\$ -	\$ 150
Grants	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 9,705	\$ 9,705
Insurance	\$ 4,615	\$ -	\$ 4,615	\$ -	\$ 4,615
Memberships	\$ 4,529	\$ -	\$ 4,529	\$ -	\$ 4,529
Other Income	\$ 15	\$ -	\$ 15	\$ -	\$ 15
Programs	\$ 35,267	\$ 35,267	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 35,267
	<b>\$ 44,575</b>	<b>\$ 35,267</b>	<b>\$ 9,309</b>	<b>\$ 9,705</b>	<b>\$ 54,280</b>
<b>Expenditure Allocation</b>					
Awards	\$ 1,510	\$ 1,510			\$ 1,510
Mood Walks	\$ 1,112	\$ 1,112			\$ 1,112
Safe Hiker Program	\$ 2,098	\$ 2,098			\$ 2,098
Senior Hike Program	\$ -			\$ 1,516	\$ 1,516
Hike Leader Training	\$ 2,444	\$ 2,444		\$ 1,625	\$ 4,069
Insurance	\$ 3,943	\$ 3,715	\$ 229	\$ 25	\$ 3,968
Interest & Bank Charges	\$ 184		\$ 184		\$ 184
Membership Fees	\$ 455	\$ -	\$ 455		\$ 455
Office Supplies	\$ 1,747		\$ 1,747		\$ 1,747
Payroll Expense	\$ 28,372	\$ 25,472	\$ 2,900	\$ 628	\$ 29,000
Professional Fees	\$ 5,200		\$ 5,200		\$ 5,200
Occupancy Costs	\$ 1,800	\$ 1,550	\$ 250	\$ 700	\$ 2,500
Travel	\$ 10,708	\$ 10,708	\$ -	\$ 1,200	\$ 11,908
Telephone	\$ 708	\$ -	\$ 708		\$ 708
	<b>\$ 60,282</b>	<b>\$ 48,610</b>	<b>\$ 11,672</b>	<b>\$ 5,694</b>	<b>\$ 65,976</b>
<b>Excess (deficiency) of receipts over disbursements</b>	<b>\$ (15,707)</b>	<b>\$ (13,343)</b>	<b>\$ (2,364)</b>	<b>\$ 4,011</b>	<b>\$ (11,696)</b>
Fund balances, beginning of year	\$ 14,226			\$ -	\$ 14,226
<b>Fund balances, end year</b>	<b>\$ (1,481)</b>	<b>\$ (13,343)</b>	<b>\$ (2,364)</b>	<b>\$ 4,011</b>	<b>\$ 2,530</b>

The explanatory notes form an integral part of these financial Statements

*See Accompanying Notes*

**Hike Ontario**  
**Financial Position**  
(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)  
**Year ended 30 June 2015**

	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>Assets</b>		
Bank Account - General	\$ 50,410	\$ 13,867
Accounts Receivable	\$ 16,494	\$ 12,471
Prepaid Accounts	\$ 11,202	\$ 200
<b>Current assets</b>	<b>\$ 78,105</b>	<b>\$ 26,538</b>
	<b>\$ 78,105</b>	<b>\$ 26,538</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Accrued Accounts Payable	\$ 6,410	\$ 12,312
Deferred Revenue	\$ 13,595	\$ -
	<b>\$ 20,005</b>	<b>\$ 12,312</b>
<b>Fund Balances</b>		
Restricted Funds		
Seniors Hike Grant Funds ( <b>Note 3</b> )	\$ 55,570	\$ -
	\$ 55,570	\$ -
	<b>\$ 75,575</b>	<b>\$ 12,312</b>
Unrestricted accumulated surplus	\$ 2,530	\$ 14,226
	<b>\$ 2,530</b>	<b>\$ 14,226</b>
	<b>\$ 78,105</b>	<b>\$ 26,538</b>

**Director**\_\_\_\_\_ **Director**\_\_\_\_\_

The explanatory notes form an integral part of these financial Statements

*See accompanying Notes*



### **1. Purpose of the Organization**

Hike Ontario was incorporated on January 16, 1975 in the Province of Ontario as a not-for-profit corporation. The objectives of Hike Ontario are to advance hiking and walking trail use in the Province of Ontario and to provide related educational services. As a not-for-profit corporation without Share Capital, it is exempt from income taxes under section 149(1)(t) of the Income Tax Act.

### **2. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies**

Hike Ontario follows the accrual basis of accounting whereby revenue is recorded when earned and expenses are recorded when goods and services have been received.

Hike Ontario receives a significant amount of donated services from members as volunteers the fair market value of which is difficult to determine. Accordingly the value of donated services are not reflected in the Financial Statements.

This summary of the major accounting policies is presented to assist the reader in evaluating the financial statements contained herein. These policies have been followed consistently in all material respects for the periods covered:

#### **Fund accounting**

Grants are recognized in revenue when reasonable assurance exists with respect to its amount and collectability and in proportion to authorized and related expenditures incurred as Hike Ontario fulfills the requirements of the grant. Grants received in advance of fulfillment are reported on the balance sheet as deferred revenue.

### **3. Senior's Hike Grant**

In 2015, Hike Ontario received a grant from the Province of Ontario for \$ 65,200 to promote hiking for individuals 55 and older. The grant expires March 31, 2016. Hike Ontario is requesting extension in order to complete the Grant Program.

Grants are recognized in revenue when reasonable assurance exists with respect to its amount and collectability, and in proportion to authorized and related expenditures incurred at Hike Ontario fulfills the various requirements of each grant. Grants received in advance of fulfillment of related terms and conditions are shown as deferred revenue on the Balance Sheet.

Insurance program fees are levied at the beginning of the year to participating clubs and invoiced accordingly. Unpaid fees at Hike Ontario's fiscal year end are shown on the Balance sheet as Accounts Receivable and deferred revenue until recognized as revenue.

*Unaudited - see Notice to Reader dated 31 August 2015*

## VIRGINIA JOHNSON AWARD

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This award is dedicated to the memory of Virginia Johnson, a wonderful volunteer who showed tremendous dedication and proficiency in making Hike Ontario an effective organization. The winner of this award is Tom Friesen, our 2014 – 2015 Hike Ontario President.

On behalf of the Hike Ontario Executive Committee and our Project Manager, I would like to nominate Tom Friesen for the Virginia Johnson Award. This award goes to someone who has shown tremendous dedication and proficiency in making Hike Ontario an effective organization. Tom has worked close to full time as President, and has moved the yardsticks prodigiously for the organization. Tom inspire others by his work ethic, ability to gain commitments, to overcome adversity, and by his innovative takes on new thrusts for Hike Ontario.

He has done this both in his current roles as President, Instructor, Motivator, Hike Leader, and as a positive Role Model to many, as well as his contribution in numerous roles prior to becoming president.

Congratulations, Tom!

**Submitted by:** Raymond Soucy  
Chair , Fundraising CTTE

## 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 three 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 2014-2015 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS ARE:

#### **David Francis, Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association**

For his many years of dedicated commitment to:

- promoting active living by leading many hikes for the Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association, the Oak Ridges Trail Association and the Dufferin Hi-Land Bruce Trail Club
- to the development of the Hike Leader Certification program of Hike Ontario
- serving as President of the Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association and of Hike Ontario

- serving as the Hike Ontario representative on Hike Canada
- starting a hiking group in his community of Tecumseth Pines
- supporting the creation of the Trans Canada Trail in New Tecumseth
- and for introducing so many new hikers to the sport we all love.

For his many years of exceeding all due expectation. We thus accord to DAVID FRANCIS With the 2015 Volunteer of the Year Award

**Submitted by:** Frieda Baldwin  
Ganaraska Hiking Trail Association

### **Helen Varekamp, Bayfield River Valley Trail Association**

On behalf of the Bayfield River Valley Trail Association, please consider our nomination of Helen Varekamp.

Helen is a founding Director of the Bayfield River Valley Trail Association which was established in 2006. Helen recognized that the Trail organization could become a focal point to help bring the community together, that it could provide the means to help make this area a healthier place to live and visit and that it could lead residents with environmental initiatives.

Since it's inception, Helen has invested a huge amount of time and energy in the Bayfield River Valley Trail Association and over the past year, her efforts have been especially significant.

During 2014, Helen coordinated the training of several Hike Ontario Certified 'Hike Leaders.' Once the leaders were in place, Helen organized a series of regular monthly guided hikes on our five trails. We have had evening "Owl Prowls", winter snow shoe walks, Historical guided walks, walks lead by professional naturalists and bird watches.

On New Year's Day, she was one of the organizers of our Mayor and Municipal Council's "Levee and Hike", which gave residents an opportunity to wish our local political leaders good luck in the 2015 and enjoy a beautiful winter's walk in the woods on one of our beautiful trails. This also gave our community leaders the opportunity to reinforce the message about the importance of the Trails.

In February, on Family Day, most of the community volunteer organizations in Bayfield participate in 'Soups On'. Representatives of each group create their most tasty soup and hundreds of people line up in our Town Hall to savour the soup and vote on a winner. Helen created a fantastic offering on behalf of the Trail Association.

Helen is determined that the Bayfield River Valley Trail Association represents the environmental values of the community. With other members of the Association, she helped coordinate our efforts in selling

Water Barrels in 2014 and Green Cone Waste Digesters in 2015. She also organized a “Community Clean-up”.

We believe that Helen Varekamp’s passion for her community, her support for making this a healthier place and for her determination to have the Trail Association embrace worthy environmental initiatives, makes her a wonderful candidate for Hike Ontario’s Volunteer of the Year.

**Submitted by:** Roger Lewington  
Bayfield River Valley Trail Association

### **David Martin, Avon Trail**

There are individuals who belong to multiple trail associations and contribute in a myriad of ways. David K Martin is one of those remarkable people. He belongs to every trail association whose trail he uses.

A strong background in government and work with volunteer managed organizations gives him both competence and credibility. A past board member of the Bruce Trail as well just finishing up a term as the treasurer of the Avon Trail, David brings a firm determination to do the right thing in the correct way to everything he tackles. He assisted Hike Ontario mightily to institute correct practices and engage competent professionals so that our operation can be both risk free and sustainable. To do this he spent countless hours as a volunteer. He always had a strong vision of what needs to be done and communicates this clearly. His work demonstrates quality of thought and action.

He is also a trail worker on an international level.

If trail associations and hiking clubs each had this kind of volunteer, they would all realize great benefits.

**Submitted by:** multiple Hiking Clubs  
& Trail Associations



**“Above all, do not lose your desire to walk. Every day I walk myself into a state of well-being and walk away from every illness. I have walked myself into my best thoughts, and I know of no thought so burdensome that one cannot walk away from it.”**

**--Søren Kierkegaard**



**hike ontario**

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